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**Reclaiming our bodies: Towards a sentient pedagogy of liberation**

**Taylor, Sherry Badger, Ed.D.**

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1991**

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RECLAIMING OUR BODIES: TOWARDS A SENTIENT PEDAGOGY  
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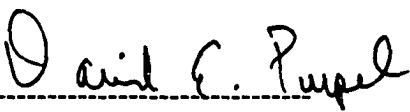
by

Sherry Badger Taylor

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Approved by

  
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APPROVAL PAGE

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This dissertation is a contribution to the development of the theory and practice of critical pedagogy. In particular the dissertation focuses upon the importance of the body as a site for critical reflection. The body here provides the dialectical linkage between the particular and the general, the individual and the social. Such a linkage is deemed necessary for understanding of one's everyday experiences as they are structured in relationship to the culture and one's life world.

The dissertation follows recent feminist and postmodern theorizing in its demand that human knowledge be grounded in the experience of the historically and culturally situated body/subject. The notion of situated knowledge as it is incorporated by the human subject and is inscribed on the body as a lived process is the central issue of this work. In terms of this examples are given of the ways in which the body becomes a vehicle for oppression, resistance, and liberation.

The work traces the philosophical roots of the separation of mind and body, and its influences on the notion of a critical rationality which attends to intellectual as opposed to embodied knowing. It reviews recent attempts by critical and feminist scholars to develop a discourse centered on the oppressed body. Using a phenomenological methodology the author engages in a series of personal reflections - "body memories" - through which her life-world is critically interrogated. In these she illustrates how the body mediates culture and social ideology. From these reflections the author suggests future possibilities for a curriculum concerned with the praxis of social change and human liberation. In terms of this the work

argues for an expanded notion of the aesthetic in education in which the aesthetic refers to the whole region of human perception and sensation - the body experiencing.



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I cannot, of course, acknowledge all of those who have made the writing of this dissertation possible. But in looking back over this work I see how it reflects specific influences which have shaped my thinking, and moreover the nature of my being from which it was created. Inherent in this nature is a strong will which I have embodied from my mother, Retha Salamanchuck. From the way she lived her life I learned to question from my heart, live life passionately, act with compassion, and resist oppressive roles for women. To my sons, Chris and Jason, I feel a deep gratitude for their giving so graciously an undoubting faith and continuous love throughout this journey.

I have learned a great deal from many whom I have shared experiences with during my doctoral work. I cherish those memories and hold them with affection. More specifically to this work I wish to acknowledge John Gambel who kept my body grounded in dance, and Fritz Mengert who inspired me to ask questions concerning existence. I feel greatly indebted to David Purpel and Sue Stinson for expanding my thinking about the moral dimensions of education, for encouraging me to struggle with my limited notion of feminism, and for having faith in my desire to do both.

Last, to Svi Shapiro, I wish to express that it was "with" him that I was able to give meaning and purpose to my life in the true spirit of prophetic education. For such a powerful and sweet gift I want to thank him.

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Historians long ago began to write the history of the body. They have studied the body in the field of historical demography or pathology; they have considered it as the seat of needs and appetites, as the locus of physiological processes and metabolisms, a target for the attacks of germs or viruses; they have shown to what extent historical processes were involved in what might seem to be the purely biological base of existence; and what place should be given in the history of society to biological "events" such as the circulation of bacilli, or the extension of the lifespan. But the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks to perform ceremonies, to emit signs.

- Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punishment

## CHAPTER ONE

### THINKING ABOUT THINKING

... the most thought-provoking thing is that we are still not thinking...

Thinking is not so much an act as a way of living...a way of life. It is a remembering who we are as human beings and where we belong. It is a gathering and focusing of our whole selves on what lies before us; a taking to heart and mind these particular things before us in order to discover them in their essential nature and truth. (Heidegger, 1968, xi)

Martin Heidegger (1968) brings our attention to the dialectical relationship between "how we think" and "how we live." He reminds us that our being-in-the-world is one of relationship to others and to the larger world. What is to be uncovered in relationship are the "truths" of human existence; that which lies before us. There is no final or absolute "Truth", but there are "truth's." At the same time there is an undeniable reality to existence. This is the social and institutional reality that confronts human beings in their everyday lives - a reality that cannot be ignored or forgotten without punishment. Cornel West speaks to the "realness" that is found in our everyday lives:

...there is a reality *that one cannot not know*. The ragged edges of the Real, of Necessity, not being able to eat, not having shelter, not having health care, all this is something that one cannot not know. (1988, p. 277)

West, along with William James, Charles Pierce and John Dewey represent the American pragmatist tradition. Philosophically speaking, pragmatism called into question any claims to truth or reality separated from the social practices from which they are produced. Rejected is the notion of a Reality or Truth that can be reached through abstractions of an experience to justify claims about the experience, and the notion that the mind alone provides the sphere for inquiry into knowledge (West, 1988). One can no longer think in terms of purified abstractions, rather truth, being, and existence are a single event. Events, truths, or reality are revealed through a critical understanding of the individual/social relationship. Understanding of such social relationships requires a critical way of thinking that recognizes and brings to the surface human participation in the co-creation of life as it has existed, presently exists, and may be found in the possibilities of future existence.

Most poetically, Heidegger's "ways of thinking" call us back to think with our heart - a call to hear the most primal call - the call of Being. He brings together the critical, creative, and moral aspects of thinking and unifies them into a philosophy that is ontologically, rather than epistemologically oriented. The power behind Heidegger's questioning of "What is called thinking?" is in his desire to recall the original question of being. And in effect, this question unites us as humans with a responsibility for ourselves and the world in which we live. The ontological understanding is one in which, Heidegger asserts, thinking and questioning is inherent in being-in-the-world. Questioning leads the way of thinking about our lives and the world in which we live. In connecting what we care about

to what and how we question, Heidegger reasserts the importance of the relationship between the structuring of the question (the way we think) to the answers or realities we find.

In old English, thinking is referenced to the word *Thanc* which means memory; as a thinking that recalls the gift of thinking and gives thanks for it. Heidegger writes:

The thanc, the heart's core, is the gathering of all that concerns us, all that we care for, all that touches us insofar as we are, as human beings. What touches us in the sense that it defines and determines our nature, what we care for, we might call contiguous or contact... Only because we are gathered by nature in contiguity can we remain concentrated on what is at once present and past to come. The word "memory" originally means this incessant concentration on contiguity. In its original telling sense, memory means as much as devotion. The *thanc* unfolds in memory, which persists in devotion. (1968, pp. 144-145)

This contiguity is the relationship between all that we touch and all that touches us. Touching can be imaged as all that concerns us in the "everydayness" of our lives. The relationship is one between all that is the subject/object - man/other/world relationship. In this sense, the thinking of wo/man recalls her/his own ability to hold close those things we come to care for and be concerned about. These things are to be known as all inclusive of ourselves and our relationship to others and the larger world. Further, we are to remember that our humanness depends on our constructing these relationships into "a way of living." In so doing, one devotes oneself to the memory of what has been taken to heart - all that touches us insofar as we are human beings. In giving thanks, the heart recalls where it remains gathered and concentrated - it belongs in acknowledgement of

relationship. As humans we can conceive of the possibility to envision and make possible our future existence through a way of thinking which (as Heidegger states) is thinking that recalls the interdependent nature of consciousness, world, and reality.

### **Education and Critical Theory: Finding the Structures**

I return here to the philosophical underpinnings of education. As noted, the pragmatic tradition began the serious questioning of what we claim as truth and the approach from which something is come to be known as true. Reality began to be thought about in terms of real human conditions and these conditions were to be understood in terms of a web of social relationships. The activity inside the web is linked to human agency and the context in which that agency is enacted (West, 1988). Another theory, which has as its basis social relationships, emerged from the European tradition of critical social theory. The discussion of critical pedagogy as a philosophy for education (McLaren 1989) - a central concern of this dissertation - draws on these two theoretical frameworks. Each leads us to a concern with questions of human existence and takes seriously the relationship between "how we think" and "how we live."

Critical pedagogy theoretically developed and draws from a number of perspectives including social reconstructionists, the Frankfurt school of critical theory, the sociology of knowledge, and feminist studies (McLaren & Hammer, 1989). Characteristic to these disciplines or perspectives is the concern for problematization of the concrete relations between the individual and the cultural



forms in which they exist. Critical pedagogy starts from a critique of schooling in terms of its role in the shaping of subjectivity for a particular form of social life. Implied in this view is the recognition of the way existing social structures reproduce and perpetuate racism, sexism, and the inequalities of the class structure. Kathleen Weiler (1988, p.6) defines critical educational theory, "...what essentially defines critical educational theory is its moral imperative and its emphasis on the need for both individual empowerment and social transformation."

Critical pedagogy as a philosophy of praxis actively induces a dialogue which struggles with competing concepts of "how to live meaningfully in a world confronted by pain, suffering, and injustice" (McLaren & Hammer, 1989, p. 39). Pedagogy here is not to be equated narrowly with instructional practices. It includes the total reality of the classroom and a critique of how that reality comes to be formed through the integrating of a particular curriculum content and design, classroom strategies and techniques, and methods of evaluation, purpose, and methods. Together they produce a particular ideological version of what knowledge has the most worth, who has the knowledge, what it means to know something and how we use that knowledge to construct or reconstruct ourselves, others, and our environment. Students' experiences must be analyzed to understand how those experiences were shaped, produced, legitimated, or unconfirmed in reference to the dominant forms of knowledge. Roger Simon (1987, p. 370) says, "In other words, talk about pedagogy is simultaneously talk about the details of what students and others might do together and the cultural politics such practices support. In this perspective, we cannot talk about teaching

practices without talking about politics."

### **Critical Pedagogy: A Way of Thinking**

Critical pedagogy takes to heart the possibility of education engaging in a process of human liberation for social transformation. It speaks with a vision of and commitment to education with this as its central purpose. Peter McLaren (1989, p. 160) gives words to the foundational principles.

Critical pedagogy resonates with the sensibility of the Hebrew symbol of "tikkun", which means "to heal, repair, and transform the world, all the rest is commentary." It provides historical, cultural, political, and ethical direction for those in education who still dare to hope. Irrevocably committed to the side of the oppressed, critical pedagogy is as revolutionary as the earlier views of the authors of the Declaration of Independence: since history is fundamentally open to change, liberation is an authentic goal, and a radically different world can be brought into being.

The connection between critical pedagogy and the Heideggerian sensibility for thinking is in the understanding that "how we think" is implicated in "how we live." This critical remembering of existence is the crucial departure and returning point for all inquiries into how we create our own lives and the lives of others.

Critical inquiry becomes an integral part of revealing the interaction between the students' individual life and the society in which it is formed. Critical pedagogy has developed a method for "problematizing" the students' lives and their world. Essential to this is a critical understanding through which students come to "make sense" of their lives through an awareness of the dialectical relationship between their subjectivity and the dominant culture. This critical understanding comes from

a process of thinking that makes problematic ones' "everyday" life. Central to this is the validation of personal knowledge. This implies a concept of empowerment through which individuals find their authentic voices. Their voices articulate both a critical language and a language of possibility.

The question from which all other questions originate is the question of being - living as such - making concrete one's own existence. Recognizing the essential question of being, critical pedagogy follows Heidegger's concern, but extends it into a concern for authentic living connected to social transformation. It is dedicated to critical understanding and the project of human liberation. It gives attention to "the way," or the journey that takes us out of alienation and the apprehension of our lives (Bruss, 1985, interview with Freire).

### **Perspectives On Critical Pedagogy**

Thinking itself is a way. We respond to the way only by remaining underway. Nevertheless, if we are to remain underway we must first give attention to the way. The movement, step by step, is what is essential here. Thinking clears its way only by its own questioning advance. But this way is curious. The way that is cleared does not remain behind, but is built into the next step, and is projected forward from it.

Martin Heidegger (1968, pp. 169-70)

### **A Discourse for Critical Educators**

To understand how pedagogical practices represents a particular politics of experience, Henry Giroux argues that:

... critical educators need to develop a discourse that can be used to interrogate schools as ideological and material embodiments of a complex web of relations of culture and power, on the one hand, and as socially constructed sites of contestation actively involved in the production of lived experiences on the other. (1985, p. 23)

Underlying Giroux's argument is one which points to "problematizing" and interrogating everyday classroom experiences; how they are produced, interpreted, accepted, contested, and/or legitimated. Most simply, it is a recognition that schools embody the politics of the culture from which they are formed. Svi Shapiro (1989, p.81) defines culture as "...the terrain of struggle and contestation in which the subordinate and the oppressed constantly produce counter values, beliefs, images and ways of thinking that question and challenge domination, injustice, and alienation." The discourse needed directs us towards the concept of cultural literacy where the meanings embedded in the dominant and subordinate cultures are exposed and discussed in their knowledge/power relationships. Cultural literacy is a reading of personal experiences as they are formed by the dominant culture. Dominant refers to social practices, social forms, and social structures that affirm the central values, interests, and concerns of the social interest in control of the material and symbolic wealth in society (McLaren, 1989).

Giroux and Simon (1988, p.16) note that a starting point for the pedagogical dialectic encounter is in popular culture as that "terrain of images, knowledge forms, and affective investments which define the ground on which one's 'voice' becomes possible." The term voice refers to cultural grammar and background knowledge that students use to interpret and articulate experience (McLaren, 1989). Individual voices must be understood within their cultural grounding.

Critical pedagogy refers to this process, as giving voice to one's own experiences by articulating the "reality" of one's life; coming to critical understanding of the social/cultural mapping of consciousness; and using individual voices collectively to struggle in the re-telling and re-making of life stories.

Critical pedagogy claims and affirms the experience of lived reality and cultural difference as a central resource for a pedagogy of possibility. The dialectical nature of this process is understood as the tension between theory, practice, and experience. Giroux and Simon (1988, p. 16) write concerning the tensions brought out in the struggle to define these 'lived' differences.

Such a discussion of lived difference, if pedagogical, will take on a particular tension. It implies a struggle over assigned meaning, a struggle over the direction in which to desire, over particular modes of expression, and ultimately a struggle over multiple and even contradictory versions of "self." It is a struggle that makes possible new investments and knowledge beyond individual experience and hence can redefine the possibilities we see both in the conditions of our daily lives and in those conditions which are "not yet." This is a struggle over the very notion of pedagogy itself..."

What is taught, what texts are used, how students are evaluated, whose stories are told, what discourse formulates the values experienced - all that takes form between teachers and students become the curricular content. Magnified are the subjective/cultural formations. The lenses chosen assist in making clearer the relational formations, such as, race, class, gender, age, ethnicity (or any other social/cultural classification) which takes part in forming subjectivity.

### **A Pedagogy of Questions**

Paulo Freire (1985) calls for a pedagogy which leaves behind what he calls the "banking" concept of schooling in which students become depositories for a "set" knowledge imposed by teachers. To replace this concept of schooling is one in which:

- the purpose of education is to empower students for personal and social transformation;
- the curriculum is always connected to concrete issues of the student's life;
- critical thinking is a way of finding one's own voice in personal articulation of the individual/social dialogue;
- critical understanding is a foundational process in meaning-making of one's own life; and
- critical and creative consciousness are reunited in imaging a moral vision for a more fully human life.

It is a pedagogy, argues Freire (1988), that leads to the possibility of transforming, not only ourselves as teachers, but also our students. Therefore, it becomes not only liberating, but also empowering to both teacher and learner.

To speak of transformation brings into the conversation a hermeneutic process of attending to, reflecting upon, and the interpretation of "what is" - reality as we know it. Beyond interpretation is the moral intention for change from "what is" to "what ought to be." David Purpel (1988, p. 162) echoes this transformative theme: "...curriculum for justice and social passion unites serious social criticism with possibilities for an alternative community based on ethical principles." Giroux and

Simon (1988, p. 13) summarize what education organized around critical pedagogy would be concerned with.

This means that teaching and learning must be linked to the goals of education students: to understand why things are the way they are and how they got to be that way; to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar; to take risks and struggle with ongoing relations of power from within a life-affirming moral culture; and to envisage a world which is "not yet" in order to enhance the conditions for improving the grounds upon which life is lived.

### **A Struggle for Connections: Making The Personal Political**

Ideological critique inevitably raises moral concerns. It exposes questions of social injustice, inequality, asymmetrical power, and the lack of human rights or dignity. This kind of contextual criticism connects the moral with the political. Shapiro distinguishes the curricular concerns of critical pedagogy with a social-interventionist intent.

At the core of the social-interventionist approach to curricular knowledge is the notion of cultural literacy. Its central concern is not the accumulation of discrete skills or the segmented topics of sub-oriented schooling, but broad apprehension of the social/cultural formation which structures our everyday world. In this sense the curriculum is concerned with the connection of human practices among and between the moral/cultural, the political, the economic, the religious, the artistic and literary, and elsewhere. It must also emphasize, in the study of these spheres, the need for critical insight - awareness that penetrates the ideology of surface description in which our world is named in partial and distorting ways. Of course, a cultural literacy that attempts to provide critical awareness of the social/cultural formation cannot be a continuation of the remote abstractions of liberal arts tradition. It must, instead, be deeply rooted in the experience of individuals daily struggling with the crises of survival - material, moral, spiritual, and psychological. (1986, p. 11)

Education, in the critical sense, focuses on the relationship between the individual's experiences and the socio-historical context within which the experience is produced. It speaks a language developed of everyday experiences - the experience of "what is." Yet, this is only one side of the coin. Shapiro (1986, p. 10) explains, "Social-interventionist pedagogy is concerned with both what is and what might be. While the first face is analytic and relentlessly probing, the latter face is creative, imaginative, and also, hopeful."

For students to be able to engage in critical reflection requires a certain belief or faith from educators. Kathleen Weiler (1988, p. 23) writes about the most important single assumption of Giroux's educational theory, "... (it) is upon the belief in each person's ability to understand and critique his or her own experiences and the social reality 'out there' that any project of pedagogical and ultimately social transformation rests." What is significant to critical pedagogy is the belief in the capacity of individuals to act and react upon the social world they inhabit. Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony contributed to this notion of individual agency, whereby hegemony is never complete but always in a process of being reimposed, yet always capable of being resisted by historical subjects (Weiler, 1988).

Gramsci's analysis of social consciousness as an organizing, but resisted, principle of everyday life has allowed radical educators to develop the concept of counter-hegemony. Weiler (1988) calls for the work of critical teachers to be viewed as counter-hegemonic recognizing not only the structural constraints under which they work, but also the potential inherent in teaching for transformative work.



For critical teaching, it means to struggle with students in understanding their resistance to forces acting upon their lives. It is the development of self and collective consciousness that can oppose the hegemony of the existing order, and begin to define and articulate our most desired human needs. Thus the ability of students to actively resist implies more than a change of consciousness. Drawing from feminist theory, critical theory is grounded in making the personal political.

Patty Lather writes:

The task of counter-hegemonic groups is the development of counter-institutions, ideologies, and cultures that provide an ethical alternative to the dominant hegemony, a lived experience of how the world can be different. (quoted in Weiler, 1988, p. 54)

### **A Way of Looking That Dances With Life**

A possible way of looking at things... gives the humanities their power to challenge the taken-for-granted, to move those who attend beyond their limited horizon.

Maxine Greene (1981, p. 302)

It is when we find our personal-stated human conditions unbearable that we can decide to act upon beliefs of what can be. In this action, freedom is taken as a movement leading towards a more compassionate existence. As a compassionate movement, freedom is accepted in relationship displaying the effects of how one's way of living cannot be severed from others. The impetus that impels the movement are feelings of alienation, powerlessness, and the vacuity felt from the decay of our moral and spiritual connections. Shapiro (1989) fuses this existential crisis with circumstances that arise from our economic, moral,

cultural, communal, familial, and spiritual existence. The "other side" that drives the movement are remembrances of past experiences of joy, happiness, touching, holding, closeness, community - those experiences that bring us in touch with the need for relationship for both love and understanding. They produce the images that evoke our passions for life - a life full of meaning and purpose. It is a movement grounded in the concrete dance with life, in which one remains in touch with human possibility. Maxine Greene writes concerning the link between critical thinking and human liberation:

Like Freire, I believe that the educator's efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization .... there is an obligation, I think, on the part of all who educate to address themselves, as great artists do, to the freedom of their students, to make demands on them to form the pedagogy of their own liberation - to do so rigorously, passionately, and in good faith... there is possibility of transcendence, at least the transcendence of wide-awakeness, of being able to see. And to live with "eyes open" is something other than living submerged. (1981, p. 298)

Greene's approach to the pedagogical process is in terms of conscious states of being, whereas students are called out of their submerged consciousness - their taken for granted world - and challenged to critically reinterpret through a contextualization of their experience. In making concrete the existential dimensions of their lives, they gain insight into the very structures that form their ways of being. She (p. 303) states, "I have been concerned with finding ways of arousing students from submergence, awakening them to critical consciousness and to the possibility of 'praxis' in a world they share." Freedom is a way of living - a praxis as the possibility of giving meaning to one's life through a process of making

connections. Praxis, in the critical sense, is a bonding between the two faces of thinking and being - a "moral cementing" as thinking and feeling combine in an impassioned understanding of the human condition.

If thinking is a way of life - how one lives - then freedom comes from a way of thinking which is critical, creative, and visionary. David Purpel gives insight to the critical, creative, and moral aspects of education.

Indeed, the essence of education can be seen as critical, in that its purpose is to help us to see, hear, and experience the world more clearly, more completely, and with more understanding...Another vital aspect of the educational process is the development of creativity and imagination, which enable us not only to understand but to build, make, create, and re-create our world...We are talking about a vision that can illuminate what we are doing and what we might achieve... The questions of what our vision is and should be are in fact the most crucial and most basic questions that we face. (1989, pp. 26-27)

Simply stated in terms of a critical pedagogy: the critical is turned toward the realities of living; the creative toward social transformation; and the moral toward the democratic principles of equality, social justice, freedom, and human dignity. The educational process then, becomes a paradigm for nourishing critical and creative consciousness for the purpose of human freedom (Purpel, 1989). Critical pedagogy attempts to see "the way" of "the way," understanding Heidegger in the critical sense:

Thinking is not so much an act, as a way of living... as a way of life.

### **Limitations of Critical Pedagogy**

Despite the enormous liberatory value of the critical pedagogy perspective, I believe it is a discourse which continues to speak in terms of mind/body dualism. I will argue that any approach committed to human liberation must seriously address the "body" as a site for both oppression and liberation. Recognizing the body, as well as the mind, as a cultural-historical construction illustrates the necessity for developing a critical discourse which expands our "bodily" understandings of human existence. In the following, I will begin a critique of critical pedagogy in support of an emerging discourse of "body politics," and in criticism of the continued tradition of mind/body dualism which, paradoxically, pervades and distorts our ideas about critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy, as an emancipatory philosophy, emphasizes a curriculum structured around students' experiences as a way of the forming of ones' identity. Yet, to understand this forming we must also ask how the body absorbs and constructs particular ways of being as a vehicle for socialization. Critical social theory gave us a framework that conceptualizes the inter-relationship between being and consciousness. Not only does consciousness affect being, but being affects consciousness - how we think affects how we live, and conversely how we live affects how we think. Here thinking and being are in continual interplay. To a great extent, however, this ideological or dominant consciousness has been examined and understood in terms of mind. The body as the physical reflection of the culture in which one lives has been left unexamined. What is left concealed and unexplored is the way the dominant culture is embodied in the individual subject.

## **Language Without A Body**

### **Clarification of the Problem**

It is a strange phenomenon, at this historical time of great and sometimes astounding discoveries, that it is necessary to restate the argument against the mind and body dualism in the theoretical discussion of critical social science and philosophy. Our own scientifically based model for understanding ourselves and our world has produced a methodology which has ensnared us in our acceptance of its' language of separations and abstractions. Yet, this ensnarement has not gone unnoticed. "Traditional, white, western male philosophers," suggest Friga Haug (1987, p. 28), "are beginning all of a sudden to identify with the animalistic body, perceiving their human identity threatened by the decision-making process of the computer." She continues arguing that our previous conceptual framework, (which in its abstractions allowed for a mind/body separation, and further placed the 'mind' as the master of knowledge), has come under theoretical suspicion in its inability to provide a theory for understanding our human condition.

Under the influence of universally disruptive developments in the forces of production, the mode of domination articulated to the division of labour finds itself in a process of constant (and, currently, chaotic) reconstruction. Whereas previously it was the 'mind' that was to gain mastery both over body and nature, it is now the body that is to be saved from the ravages of the scientific and technical revolution... The fact that the dualisms of body and mind, together with the division of labour between head and hand, have themselves been laid open to debate, can clearly be traced to their incapacity to explain the world as it is today.

The question of the mind/body dualism continues to be a terrain of investigation. The body has been divided into regions of biology, physiology, and kinistetics all attempting to explain the functions of "body" in abstracted language. There is also the language of psychology which discusses the body as an access to emotions for the mind to rationally sort out and take control of, the emphasis being on the individual gaining self awareness. Essentially what I have seen left out in these theories is a language which begins with a "body/subject" as a "postioned" social being. The consequence of this absence is that the experiences of the person come to be explained in highly individualistic terms, e.g., "You can learn how to control your stress by producing alpha-rhythms in your brain"; "You need to work on accepting yourself as you are"; or "It would be best for your health to take up an aerobic activity." These statements all give us the illusory feeling of taking control of our lives, but they disregard the social context in which our bodies are situated. To look beyond the individual orderings, we begin to see that, rather than learning how to control one's stress, we might better ask ourselves "What is causing the stress?" - jobs that mean nothing other than a paycheck, inability to pay bills because of unemployment or single parenting, sick children and no medical insurance, a lover with AIDS. Learning to control these feelings of stress does little to change the "real" conditions of our lives except in easing sympathetic expressions of them. We can come to better understand how to control our stress levels through relaxation processes, but we cannot begin to understand what induces the stresses without consciously locating the existential realities of people in their "everyday" life as social beings. It becomes clear that

without a particular kind of critical language which situates the body/subject in its social context we continue to speak in the dualities of mind and body, and individual and society. Absence of a dialectical-reflective language that connects mind and body, individual and society results in an inability to express and understand our lives, and therefore, to transcend the dualities and the conditions in which we live.

Haug (1987, p. 64) writes, "Contrary to reputation, our everyday language is more than a little abstract: it suppresses the concreteness of feelings, thoughts, and experiences, speaking of them only from a distance." The way language is used directs our behaviour. Language itself is taken to be "reality" - things are as they appear. Therefore, language is the material through which we live, a material we mold, and through which we ourselves are molded. It begins in our earliest schooling. We learn to write 'about' the world, rather than find a language for the structures within which we live. We neither express the feelings we experience, nor do we have any means for reflecting on, or understanding them. Haug states (1987, p. 65), "We simply reproduce the perceptions we have heard spoken by others, from whose experience they are as equally far removed." This relationship between ideology and language is the overriding factor for instilling values as it structures behaviour. Our relationship to language becomes strangely artificial as we learn to explain our world as if we exist outside of it. Educational institutions, sanctioned and regulated by state, become the site for ideological socialization of the body/subject through language of a particular ordering and in the absence of others.

This gap between the given "ordered or official" language and that of "other" languages marks the space where there are contradictions between "what we can say is real" and "what we experience as real." This polarity can be understood with a simple recognition of the contradictions made visible in education from a historical language to that of the arts, (e.g., "Columbus discovered America" - denying the pre-existence of a living Indian population; "Everyone who works hard succeeds" -leading people to blame the victims of their socioeconomic conditions; "Artists are unique in their ability to create" - separating artists as special people, and thereby resigning them to a place outside of society, stripping away the possibility of artists to make any "real" statements about human conditions). Suggesting that these Euro-centric statements provide insights for all Americans, including Indian, African, Chicano, Chinese, Puerto Rican, both sexes, and any other differing qualities, is a grave example of this dogmatic language. It strangles the voices of "other" through a presentation of a one-sided language which views the "white-male mind" as sole possessor of the knowledge which we need to live in the world, and in so doing, suffocates the possibility for a somatic language that recognizes the pains and desires of our everyday lives whether homeless, jobless, motherless, or simply living within the prison walls we built around ourselves trying to escape the pressures of a society based on Wall Street, quotas and monthly reports. Without words to describe our histories, or how we live in our bodies, we remain caught within an ideology that speaks but one story.



### **Mind Mastery**

As critical educators have engrossed themselves in exposing the relationships between the dominant ideology and the corresponding educational system, they have fallen into their own ideological trap. The concentrated efforts in critical pedagogy to make explicit the relationship of power to the dominant form of knowledge constantly ignore the body. Laurie McDade wrote (1987) that knowing does not lie dormant in the mind separate from the knowing of the heart and of the body. She continued:

Everyday moments of teaching at school in communities, then, are personal, pedagogical, and political acts incorporating mind and bodies of subjects, as knowers and as learners. When we are at our best as teachers we are capable of speaking to each of these ways of knowing ourselves and our students. And we may override precedents in the educational project that value the knowing mind and deny the knowing of the heart and body. Students, the partners in this enterprise of knowing, are whole people with ideas, with emotions, and with sensations. If we, as teachers, 'are to arouse passions now and then' (Greene, 1986, p.441) the project must not be confined to a knowing only of the mind. It must also address and interrogate what we think we know of the heart and of the body. (1987, pp. 58-59)

Any serious attempt to construct theories for understanding the relationship between the individual and society must bridge the gap between theory and experience, mind and body, and the rational and the sensual. We must question how we become "some-body", if we are to outline strategies for liberation. This leads us to examine how we have unconsciously accepted particular interpretations of the world, and how particular patterns of 'normality' have been drilled into us. The aim is to identify the ways in which our consciousness

becomes ideologized, and in so doing, we begin to define and determine our relationship to other human beings and to the larger world (Haug, 1987). To do so in bodily terms, is to reinterpret those taken-for-granted aspects of our lives with an intention of investigating: 1) the ways in which bodily activities are organized, 2) the ways in which the body itself and the feelings in and around it have arisen historically, and 3) the ways in which this relates to our insertion to society as a whole.

Guiding this investigation are two processes. The first is an inquiry into the "memory of the body." Secondly, these memories will be decoded in a process which focuses on situations in which we voluntarily submit to our own subordination, or in which we develop forms of lived resistance. This decoding becomes the written signs of the relations within which subjectivity is formed. The research element for this study becomes my own memories to be formulated as both an empirical and a lived question - as an embodied being.

### **Absence of Language**

Critical social theorist Brian Fay tells us:

Put starkly, since the problem is not in people's minds nor dependent on what goes on in them, then giving them insights into who they are, raising their consciousness by altering their self-conceptions and thereby altering their beliefs and values, is likely to be insufficient. Embodied repression calls for a strategy of liberation richer than envisioned .... (1987, p. 52)

"Embodiment" is a term reflecting the process by which the body becomes a vehicle for socialization. Fay argues (p. 146) that learning is not simply a cognitive

process, but also a somatic one in which the "oppression leaves its traces not just in people's minds but in their muscles and skeletons as well." In Peter McLaren's work in critical pedagogy he speaks of "embodiment" defined as "the terrain of flesh where ideological social structures are inscribed." McDade's, Fay's, and McLaren's work reflects the struggle for finding language to question and understand the unspoken inferences pertaining to subjective ordering by ideological institutions.

In a similar vein Don Johnson (considered to be one of the few American philosophers of the body) vividly captures how, through schooling, the physical bodies of students are patterned to fit our social and economic structures. He argues that education is primarily designed to train docile citizens and workers and this is partially achieved through forming bodily behavior. He speaks of the unspoken inferences of a particular ordering of "body knowledge" which becomes instilled within our bodies as behaviors which lead to success.

Bodily patterns of fatigue, hunger, and excitement are brought into alignment with the externally determined rhythm of the school day. Idiosyncratic behavior is generally punished, either physically, in the case of students who are too loud or restless, or through poor grades, in the case of those who don't express themselves 'correctly.' Industry is the principal beneficiary of these corporeal disciplines. Schools train people in the bodily patterns that most jobs require. The organic rhythms of the body are geared to meet the needs of the standardized working day, beginning and ending at certain hours, with carefully specified breaks for food, toilet, and rest. (1983, p. 37)

McLaren (1988b, p.62) critiques education for insufficiently recognizing its own power to construct students' subjectivities by teaching us **how to think about our**

**bodies and how to experience our bodies.** He ascribes to language a powerful constitutive influence in shaping the "body/subject."

The problem with schools is not that they ignore bodies, their pleasures, and the suffering of the flesh (although admittedly this is part of the problem) but that they undervalue language and representation as a constitutive factor in the shaping of the body/subject as the bearer of meaning, history, race, and gender.

We remain ignorant of the ideological use of language imposed upon the body which speaks directly to the forming of subjectivity. This ignorance or lack of awareness of how our everyday language is packed with preconceived values and meanings becomes the obstacle in understanding the power concealed within language. Haug (1987, p. 63) writes, "Language can serve as either a prison house, or as the material for liberation." Not only does ignorance block possibilities for liberation, but the lack of an adequate language to bring to consciousness our "embodied" selves hinders the articulation of our experiences in theoretical terms. And, the project of liberation is once again thwarted in this disjunction between experience and language. The dominant discourse surrounds the attempt of liberatory actions and contains them within its ideological net.

### **The Knowledge of the Body**

According to Keleman (1981) education of the body occurs in two specific ways. One is direct somatic learning in which the body becomes the receptor for behavioral influences addressed through language and physical environments (i.e., "Sit still"; "Face front"; "Don't touch"; "Go directly to your places"). The second

process is indirect somatic learning noted when the student learns acceptable ways of being particular to his or her culture by taking on roles (e.g, the role of mastery: "Don't cry"; "Swallow your anger"; of occupation: "How much schooling have you had?"; "What's your earning capacity?"; and, that of third sexuality: "Girls don't argue"; "Boys don't cry"). To be concerned with the shaping of the body/subject is to remember as Stanley Keleman (1981, p. 13) writes, "The body you have is the body you live." Our feelings and responsiveness shape our lives. We form our bodily selves as we shape our own reality. Our bodily living shapes our existence." Thus, for example, he argues:

In the name of Knowledge we dampen and channel aliveness. Our current system of education creates spasms. We cramp our children's bodies so that we can form their minds. The school system institutes a social contract between the kids and the teachers, and between the kids and adult authorities in general. And the model is a contraction model. Learning becomes painful. Learning becomes a chore that requires discipline. (1981, p. 128)

The forming of our being grows out of our experiences. Experiences are perceived in coordination between our minds and bodies - that which forms our being. This forming is the historically situated, culturally inscribed "reality" in which we live. Critical educators need to understand that the process of liberation requires that the body be situated linguistically, and therefore discursively, in the social/historical context. For it is within this specific context that body/subjects are able to recognize the set of connections necessary "to make sense" of their lives, and thereby begin to consciously define both their own subjugation and possibilities for liberation.

### **Rational Thinking - An Old Language**

To bring into discussion a language which emerges from our bodily living, speaks of a kind of rationality distinct from one that is intellectually rooted. It demands that we listen to our bodies, feel our emotions, release our passions, and reunite our critical powers of thinking with our feelings in hopes of a fuller humanity. As stated earlier, even in our critical discourse we continue to speak in terms of a rational-mind orientation. This passage taken from Israel Scheffler illustrates the absence of an inclusive language for the body in critical thinking.

To choose the democratic ideal for society is wholly to reject the conception of education as an instrument for rule; it is to surrender the idea of shaping or molding the mind of the pupil. The function of education in a democracy is rather to liberate the mind, strengthen its critical powers, inform it with knowledge and the capacity for independent inquiry, engage its human sympathies, and illuminate its moral and practical choices. (1972, p. 311)

Scheffler reminds us that rationality can liberate. In rational thinking students are encouraged to see beyond the surface of the ideology in which they live, ask for justifications, seek alternatives, and be critical of their own ideas, as well as others. This dissertation will argue that being critical in the "mind-sense" is not enough. Critical awareness must go into new territories in addressing the overriding emphasis in the institutions of education that value the knowing mind and that continually deny the knowing of the heart and of the body. What is to be exposed is what remains absent, silent, and un-named, revealing the relationship between language and ideology, and specifically the failure to adequately name the way we live, as embodied beings.

## **Projections**

### **The Framework**

Chapter Two continues the introductory discussion in an attempt to further reveal the issues described in Chapter One, "Thinking About Thinking." Three major sections will lead the reader through an investigation of the epistemological subordination of the concrete language of body-experience. Its references are the philosophical, theological and sociological discourses which have shaped our contemporary ways of thinking and of being.

The discussion begins with questioning the effects of a rational discourse in Western philosophical thought, and will be followed by a consideration of the historical and philosophical separation of the rational and the sensual. I attempt here to argue the importance of relational understanding which recognizes a dialectic between mind and body, self and society. The final section will situate these dialectical relationships in the context of the issues of power, ideology, and material life. The discussion will emphasize the way that this dominant "anti-body" discourse constitutes the major framework for understanding, living in, and giving meaning to our everyday lives. The purpose here is to provide a contextual framework for understanding a discourse of "body politics" which has been developed in work of feminists and postmodern theories, and in liberation theology (and is developed in later chapters).

Chapter Three will again reiterate the implications of Enlightenment thinking and its consequence in our alienation from the human capacity to "be touched," "care about," and "create" in terms of our everyday lives. A discussion of Critical Theory

and its emphasis on rational thinking - the legacy of Enlightenment thought - will provide the schema for understanding the limited nature of such a discourse for human liberation. In returning to Critical Theory, I will attempt to provide clear examples of ways in which our bodies are culturally marked or inscribed, in particular relationships to oppression and resistance. As such, I will suggest that by recognizing the body as a site for critical social reflection we may also recognize the possibilities for human and social transformation.

Chapter Four will then illustrate a critical reflective process which connects personal narrative and cultural analysis. I will argue that it is this dialectic between personal narrative and cultural analysis which constitutes a critical pedagogy. This pedagogy calls upon the memories of the experiences as encountered by and with our bodies as the primary texts for our critical reflection. In so doing, we move into the everyday "life-world" and use personal reflection as the basis for self and social understanding. In order to do this, I provide a series of personal memories that arise out of my experiences as a student, dancer, mother, educator, and woman. The hope here is that this chapter might illustrate the meaning and possibilities of a critical pedagogy that values what the body "knows." And secondly, this chapter provides the subjective writing of the preceding three chapters as it discloses in narrative form the ideas and issues raised previously in a more abstract language. As such, it makes concrete the issues brought out.

My final chapter will contain some concluding comments on the dissertation as a whole. I consider the dissertation as it is constructed around three major discourses. They include the philosophical, the area of curriculum theory, and



critical pedagogy. Within the philosophical section the history of Western thought (concerned with the "absolute monarch of Reason") is briefly reimplicated in the subjugation of personal, existential knowledge. Both postmodern and feminist theories will be utilized to situate this work and to restate the argument against the notion of disembodied discourse.

Curriculum theory as a personal praxis will be the second discussion. This section will speak more directly to my own experience in writing Chapter Four. The writing of personal stories, which reflects upon body memories, and "made sense of" through cultural analysis provides an example of an educative process. I will discuss my own reflections upon involvement in such a process - a process which involves the body as a site for critical reflection. Further, this process will be related to the notion of "currere" as a model for curriculum where there is both a personal turning inward for finding voice, and social where the affective insight is reconnected to being-in-the-world.

The final section calls into question the current apathetic consciousness found in our culture today, and restates the importance of returning to a "bodied discourse" for a pedagogy concerned with human freedom as the necessary premise for personal and social transformation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE BODY AND KNOWLEDGE: TOWARDS RELATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

This chapter investigates the epistemological subordination of a concrete language of the body-experience to one which is abstracted from the lived social world. The argument develops through a description of separations of the rational being from the sensual one. These are examined through the philosophical, theological and sociological discourses which have historically shaped our contemporary ways of thinking, and of being.

My interest is to give insight to the ways in which the subordination and denial of body knowledge, or of sensate lived-experience, informs the dominant ways in which we think, believe, and value. The particular discourse in which these are represented is one, I argue, that disconnects us from that which is felt and experienced, rather than observed and made visible. The order of the "rational" over the "irrational" brings to question, in this chapter, the relationship between reason and sensing in forming knowledge. In the attempt to reveal the issues involved in "thinking about thinking" there is the disclosure of a discourse which alienates us from our own abilities to acknowledge and become responsible for our understanding, to recognize the relational and dialectical nature of ourselves and our bodies as the mediators of all knowledge.

In the first section, **Knowledge As the Dialectic of Mind and Body**, I focus on the interpenetration of mind and body as the means through which we come

to understand our world. My attempt is to illuminate the body as that which mediates and holds in memory the experiences of our lives, and in so doing, create a critical discourse for the body. Writing in this section is an interweaving and synthesis of theories and themes which reoccur throughout this chapter.

The second section, **The Historical and Philosophical Orgins of the Problem**, focuses upon how the dominant paradigm of rationalistic thinking grew out of the duality of mind and body, and how this duality has been destructive to relational and experiential knowing. The exploration of the separation of being and thinking is drawn from the work of Martin Heidegger in which he establishes how early philosophical traditions led to the epistemological exclusion of the body.

In the third section, **Body and Society: An Inseparable Identity**, questions concerning how the dominant paradigm of knowing has affected our values and notions of morality are examined through the work of Michel Foucault, Brian Turner's work on sociology of the body, Brian Fay's work in critical theory, and Frigga Haugg's feminist work. Using these authors I focus upon the cultural polarities of male reason and female passion, and how these are expressed in separation of the public and private domains within society. What I wish to make clear in this section is the way in which the body is situated by, and within, relationships of power. Through consideration of the ideological subjugation of the body/private/female in patriarchial discourse, I attempt to demonstrate issues of power and dominance that permeate all of our social relations.

### **Knowledge As the Dialectic of Mind and Body**

To engage in the dialectic of self and society one must first engage in, as John Berger (1982) calls it, "Another Way of Telling" in which appearances of the culture are treated as signs addressed to the living. The appearance of what we see and accept as knowledge is only half the language. To think, feel, or remember goes beyond surface descriptions. Embedded within perceptions and interpretations are personal experiences understood through a hegemonic consciousness which suspends us in the contradictions between a dominant and a resistant consciousness. From this space between domination and resistance is where meaning is found, securing the living body as the material which holds both. Ideas do not exist somewhere outside of this living material. What we know is at all times attached to bodily knowing, whether as tacit knowing or as conscious knowing. What we know speaks with and to our bodily memories of living. Both mind and body mingle together in a continuous informational stream creating the interpretations we call knowledge. As such, we experience our interpretations as reality. This continual forming of ourselves gives rise to philosophies, dogmas, and other image-systems which, by stereotyping us, assure us a sense of perpetual identity (Keleman, 1981). This forming is a creative process and can be either conscious or unconscious. Marion Woodman distinguishes the inseparability of the two.

Ultimately, conscious and unconscious are one. **The conscious purpose is** not simply to reproduce or perpetuate, but **to know** [emphasis added]. It is the difference between unconscious creation and conscious creation. (1985, p. 119)

Woodman accentuates the relationship between consciousness and knowledge as one which requires a critical contextualization. To be ignorant of the dominant consciousness, which forms our knowledge systems, is to limit our human potential to reproducing and perpetuating our current condition. Without awareness of the relationship between critical thinking and the ways in which we live our everyday lives, we remain in a state of unconscious creation. This common tendency can be traced back to philosophical traditions when the separation between mind and body, being and thinking occurred (I will return to this discussion later in the chapter.).

Contrary to what has been the dominant tendency in European philosophies of thinking, Heidegger re-attaches thinking to being. He turns us away from thinking as a kind of gathering of knowledge which can be separated from that which gathers. Thinking, he argues, is to be learned; and to learn is to address oneself to the relatedness between oneself (as subject) and the world within which one is living -- being-in-the-world. Only then can understanding of being begin.

Touching is the extension of human consciousness; sensing through the hand materializes the life-world. Language is the abstraction of touch. It represents how we think and it makes materially present the consciousness with which we live.

All the work of the hand is rooted in thinking...And only when man speaks, does he think... (Heidegger, 1968, p. 16)

Only when we begin to hear the impoverished nature of our rational language and begin to see the destructive work of our hands, can we begin to understand the power of human touch. Our impoverished thinking displays itself in the social

injustices and inequalities, continually and materially exposed, in the "fleshless" bodies of starving children; in the glazed-over eyes of humans addicted to narcotizing their senses to protect themselves from the harsh realities of life; and in bodies that simply wear out in the struggle for survival. John Berger (1984, p. 33) defines our human response to the death of life as he writes: "What we mourn for in the dead is the loss of their hopes." As caring and concerned human beings we ask "What is this language that has perverted our humanity?" We look out and see that the inscriptions of our hands are left everywhere.

The work of John Berger and others, such as Andrea Dworkin, suggests that there is nothing between touching and not touching. Both create a conduit from the past into the future. Postmodern thinkers as Richard Rorty and Jacques Derrida have theorized the relationship between language and shaping of our life-world arguing that our world exists as we have, and continue to name it. Every life encounters the human touch. What it carries is our fingerprints. The unheard and unspoken words of children, minorities, women, blacks, jobless, homeless, and "others" are turned inward to echo inside their own "life bodies."

### **Historical and Philosophical Origins of the Problem**

"Reason," Heidegger argues (1968, p. 41), "is the perception of what is, which always means also what can be and ought to be." It is this understanding of reason that concerns itself with possibility grounded in critical understanding and contextualized through critical reflection upon concrete existence. Possibility here retains within it both an understanding of both "what is" and "what is not" - "what

is missing" and "what is desired." Implied here is a way of thinking which is anchored in one's everyday life and made sense of through the process of giving meaning to sensate - lived experiences. Through a process of "sensual reasoning" one becomes actively engaged in refusing the mind and body separation. Reasoning as an ability to critically situate oneself in a historical and social grounding runs in opposition to modern societies which have adopted a paradigmatic model of thinking based in abstraction. The sensual body has been historically bound by the domination of a idealist tradition which, since Plato, placed the mind over body, and ideas over the senses (Seidel 1964). In this the body came to be understood biologically or physically, rather than existentially.

Another crucial dimension in the history of the separation of mind from body is Christian theology which pointed its finger at the body as something which housed evil desires and passions, and therefore needed to be held under the laws of the rational (and more Godly) mind. The historical verdict was a "guilty and sinful body," and an oppressive discourse of sacrifice, acceptance of suffering, humility, and meekness (Sharon Welch, 1985, p. 15).

Heidegger's concept of reason which is constituted through thinking and being (concrete existence), calls into question the historical separation of mind and body, and the subordination of the body from epistemological discussion.

Under the predominance of rationalism, the cognitive function of sensuousness has been constantly minimized. Sensuousness retained (in Western traditional thought) a measure of philosophical dignity in a subordinate epistemological position; those of its processes that did not fit into the rationalistic epistemology; that is those that went beyond the passive perception of data - become homeless. Foremost among these homeless content and values were those of

imagination: free, creative, or reproduction intuition of objects which are not directly 'given'... (Marcuse, 1966, p. 180)

This quote from Marcuse, one of Heidegger's most prominent students, reminds us of the relationship between the elevated position of the mind in a rationalistic model of knowing and the diminishing one of the body. Concerns for what is left out in this mode of thinking shifts the conversation to examine what Marcuse names as "the homeless" values - those that carry no epistemological weight, those which cannot be captured under the scientific lens. One such "homeless" value is human imagination - that which embeds creativity and change, and the contemplation of human possibility. The possibility for imagination is vital to a pedagogy of liberation in that imagination coexists with a sense of possibility of transformation.

This philosophical separation of being and thinking, or *Physis* and *Logos*, was Heidegger's avenue for studying the origination of modern Western philosophy. Seidel (1964, p. 58) details Heidegger's description of this separation as "the most decisive factor for the western tradition of philosophy."

I will briefly sketch how the dominant paradigm in thinking has separated thinking and being, mind and body, in an attempt to label "what is" as a kind of observable factual truth. My attempt is to examine, through Heidegger's work, the early divisions in philosophical thinking which has led us to value rational knowing over experiential knowing. There are several ways of identifying and addressing the problems that arise in the separation and devaluation of experiential or body knowledge. I have chosen to present my argument in terms of "choosing life" -



that is a reflexive awareness of existence as opposed to unconscious acceptance of the pre-existing world one is born into. This discourse becomes the focal point for understanding how our bodily existence - imprinted with the existential knowledge of our concrete lives - has been virtually left out of the domain of theoretical thinking. More directly my concern is the dissonance between our dominant ways of thinking and the lives we live.

### **Appearance vs Existence**

The forgetting of "being" occurred, according to Heidegger, when philosophers rooted being in the "thingliness of things" - that is when ontological questions turned from "being of things" to appearance of the "substance of things" (Seidel, 1964). This transition was from the "to be" of a thing to the "is" of a thing. The "to be" incorporates the issue of time which carries both the past and the future. With this is the acknowledgment of humankind as the carrier of time, (rather than time existing outside of humanity), and allows for the possibility of change to occur both in what we have named as history and what is possible for the future. Further, what is disclosed is that history is created by being, carried into the present as life, and projected into the future from the present as possibility. History in this sense does not exist somewhere outside of human creation, but is continuously being created, re-created, and projected by and through the historical stories we live. Humankind is co-creator with physical nature in life, and is responsible for both life and world.

This recognition of humanity creating its own history speaks to a historical

sensibility which accepts the possibility of human agency for changing the history we live. The "to be" places the body in the center as a perceptor of life. It is with the body that one connects existence with a desire for change. Participation of the sensing, feeling, perceptive body is required to "make sense" of one's everyday life. Conceptualization is not enough for change. The order of the rational - irrational is shattered in the continuous exchange between reason and sensing. (To have an idea of the "American dream" for most Americans is drastically different from the lives that are lived in bodies that are fatigued, stressed, and pushed to make the dream come true.) Awareness of the perceptive, sensual body presents a dilemma in the delineation of reality for a society which has relinquished "the living body" to abstract reason.

"To be" conveys movement in time - something as becoming; in a state of motion, in a process of changing. "To be" is antithetical to "is" which exists in a state of stasis in the present now. Inherent in the transition from "to be" to "is" is the loss of human time - life. What is left are "facts" of the present understood as the actual presence of something as it can be observed, unhindered by its historical and social context. Failing to acknowledge the difference, sets up a paradigm for knowing which emphasizes the "observing eye" over the "telling body." Stories of life are restricted to facts which can be statistically read and analyzed to reveal some universal standards applicable to human life. Sharon Welch (1985, p. 38) clarifies two limitations when the primary task of academics becomes the disclosure of universal kinds of knowledge and their correlation with the ontological structure of existence. First, such an ontological analysis brackets the concrete

specificity of historical concerns, and secondly, the experiences of certain groups of people are excluded from the analysis. Abstraction and exclusion break down relational understanding and bleeds dry history leaving the scars of separation.

Histories which emphasize the narrative of human suffering can lead to a disclosure of the denial of particular histories, including those of blacks, Indians, women and others marginalized in the dominant male Euro-centric culture. The pretension that one's class, race, and/or sex speaks for all of humanity reveals the victors in the struggle over whose history is told and whose history is projected into the future. More dangerous is when that pretension is taken to its full extreme as in the case of the Nazis' genocide of six million Jews. Robert Lifton in his writings concerning "The Genocidal Mentality" states:

Somewhere in the intellectual history of the West there developed the wrongheaded idea that mind and heart are antagonists, that scholarship must be divested of emotion, that spiritual journeys must avoid intellectual concerns. (1990, p. 29)

The expressed values in Lifton's quote can be noted as he reveals the intellectual detachment from spiritual or moral concerns. Values here, are restricted to a scientific definition where values comes to be the property of something separated from human emotion, feeling, and connection. Yet, moral questions can only be asked in terms of relationships, as we can only ask moral questions in context.

The preoccupation of Physis with "the present" produced a truth rooted in an empirical paradigm (Seidel, 1964). The fate of being, as Heidegger suggest (Seidel), was given over to the notion - "things are as they appear," particular in the philosophy of Plato. Being, at this time, was segregated from that which could

be disclosed about itself in the act of presencing. The objectified thing became the thing to be known, rather than valued as something that could tell us about human beings and their relationship to the world. On the contrary, relevant questions concerning the nature of being human as such, the possibility of meaning, and the structures of being that underlie particular manifestations of human life were disregarded by those positioned by society as "truth-givers" - either the religious or the scientific. The importance of this lies in the change in the location of truth; whereas, in the latter sensibility truth is revealed in the uncovering of the relationship between subjects, in the former, truth is to stand alone outside of relational contamination, and therefore moral considerations.

The Greek notion of being as the "coming forth and staying around for awhile" held a twofold meaning; 1) what appears or emerges, and 2) what is permanent (Seidel, 1964, p. 34). This critical point is where Heidegger directs attention to the transformation of Western philosophical thinking. Before the abstraction, Logos and reason projected the concern for the complexity of relationships. That is to say when humans look out into the world to discover or come to know something, what is revealed is not something directly about the object, but about being itself. It raises questions about who is doing the looking, what is chosen to be looked at and what is not, what questions are asked or omitted, and what the relationship between the subject and the object reveals about being human. In other words, the object (or objective knowing) cannot escape its involvement with the subject (or subjective knowing) since it is the subject which sees, names, and interprets from a specific location in human history. As such, this "assignment" or

reference by being indicates wherein the human concern dwells (Heidegger, 1964). Truth, then, is in the event of the relationship between subject and object. To understand being is to understand the relationship between wo/man and her/his world.

In summarizing, relational understanding constitutes our "sight." It is always understood in terms of the totality of involvement between subject and object, and therefore locates understanding or "truth" in its social and historical context. Recaptured is a process which acknowledges the interdependence of personal experience, feeling, and theoretical knowledge. The abstracted-objectified "thing" is replaced by the relational context. And finally, the concern of knowledge is, once again, everyday existence - the life-world. **The investigation** is not to find the correctness of an idea or the knowledge of things, or as a declaration of something present before us. It is rather one which **is concerned with seeing something in its presence as constituted by both what has been and the possibilities of what can be. Meaning then is found in this process** through a relocating of "truth" in being-in-the-world, and **through a unification of being and thinking in an existential hermeneutic.**

Relational understanding means then that **knowledge is always grounded in bodily existence**, recognized as interpretive, and acknowledged as always being partial. Critical understanding of one's life and world means then to take seriously the connection that comes from the dialectic of mind and body, embodied existence and reasoned knowing.

Below I look more concretely at the situatedness of the body in culture. Here too I continue my attempt to develop and create a discourse of the body.

### **Body and Society: An Inseparable Identity**

#### **A Dichotomy Between A Static Language and A Concrete Language of Existence**

When is a language finished? Do we see things as they are, and forever know them? What prevents language from being static? If I choose to name one thing something else, does the first cease to exist? Do I know the power of the words that create my life as it is?

The dichotomy between a static or seamless language and a concrete-experiential language emerges when one tries to theorize a sociology of knowledge or consciousness. Without the body we cannot speak a concrete language of the transactions between the natural ordering of the world and the cultural ordering of the world. Brian Turner argues the inseparableness of the so-called natural world and the cultural world particular to the body.

...the body has physiological needs, in particular food, liquid, and sleep. The nature, content and timing of these activities of eating, drinking, and sleeping are subject to symbolic interpretations and to massive social regulations. We can thus think of the body as an outer surface of interpretations and representations and an internal environment of structures and determinations. (1984, pp. 39-40)

Secondly, Turner notes that the sociology of the body is a political sociology in that it concerns the struggle between the powerful and the powerless over the

nature of desire. Examples of this can easily be seen in laws concerning abortion, illegitimacy, homosexuality, and prostitution, and more generally the regulation of sexual behavior.

Thirdly, he argues the body lies at the center of political struggles in its "sexualization." He gives as an example a doctrine of patriarchal sovereignty enunciated in 1680.

The king is the father over his kingdom; Adam was the father over nature and humanity; God is father over man. Patriarch then comes before the authority of law and is the source of all rights and obligations. Authority is thus transubstantiated through the bodies of kings just as it is transubstantiated through the body of fathers.

In this example, the body of man receives power and authority simply by virtue of being a particular kind of body.

And fourthly, Turner states, the body and the self are not separate. If the self is realized in social relationships, the body is that physical presence that reacts externally and internally. An example is in blushing or flushing in reaction to social discomfort, and internally reacting with diseases and illnesses as expressions of the relationship between the body and the life-world. Both are considered to be deviances from "the norm" and become visibly present through the body.

There are some things that we know as experienced in our own lives. As socially constructed beings, we blush as our bodies express embarrassment when what we have said or are unable to say indicates our ignorance in front of others. Our bodies stiffen from work situations that either create stressful situations, or constrict movement into ritualistic patterns. Muscles contract in these situations

representing the restrictions of the self that may be needed to control one's anger, or to repress one's desires in order to fit into the structured norms of the workplace.

This socialization process between body and society is not simply the insertion of the body/subject into preexistent social/cultural formations; it also implies an affective investment on the part of the subject in relationship to a particular symbolic order. "Enfleshment" is a term used by critical theorists to convey a state of being where there is an unproblematic acceptance, appropriation and identification of the body/subject with any such preexistent set of symbolic meanings. Yet, McLaren (1989) suggests though that the body does more than incorporate ideas, it also generates them. Ideas have a "social materiality" presented in forms of thinking and being; they are "enfleshed" in ideologies, and historical and cultural forms of subjectivity. Enfleshment is conceived here as the mutually constitutive aspect of social structure and desire. Discourse is the materialization of those symbols in our social structures and in our bodies. McLaren writes:

Discourses do not sit on the surface of the flesh nor float about in the formless ether of the mind but are enfolded into the very structures of our desire inasmuch as desire itself is formed by the anonymous historical rules of discourse... Desire and its social determinations, its cultural objects of desire, cannot be seen separately but must be understood as mutually constitutive. (1988b, p. 61)

Desires can be considered as lacks, gaps, or needs felt to complete our subjectivity. Forms of desire can be linked historically to "modes of production." McLaren (1988b) notes that every "mode of production" has a "mode of desire."



The term "modes of desire" refers to the different ways in which desire is socially constructed (p.63). These objects of desire are not created in a value-free laboratory, but rather in conjunction with an economic structure which perpetuates itself by creating desires, and in return the products to fulfill those desires. These desires come to be seen by us as something needed to complete our subjectivity. For example, advertising is geared toward helping you to become a more complete, more successful, more beautiful (and so on) person. A gap or lack in an advertising strategy is created to communicate to the buyer that s/he has the possibility to be more by having more. The gap between "what you are" and "what you can be" becomes a desire, (whether it is to have a slimmer figure, have a shinier kitchen floor, or have a faster car). This creates an economy based on the production of desire and production of desired objects. For example capitalism engages in constructing "buyable" substitutions for human desires, such as relationships or security. Image if you will the advertisements in which beautiful women are shown alongside cars. Directed toward men in this case, it is suggested that in purchasing the car, the buyer is likely to attract (in this car) beautiful women. McLaren (1988b, p. 64) elaborates on this subject's experience; "In this context, consumer needs are often superimposed on the desires of the body so that 'the subject's intention to satisfy the body must make a detour through exchange value; the response to the demands of the body is deferred, for the visible aim of laboring is the wage' (Brenkman, 1985, p. 182).

My argument is that this kind of material substitution and production of desire inhabits our flesh and consumes our thoughts, placing our subjectivity under the

power of those that control production. Consumption driven, we live the economic nightmare of finding ourselves in a constant state of desire for the next consumer "fix." Desire and its social determinations cannot be separated in a critical analysis, but must be understood as mutually constitutive.

In the following section, I will continue to discuss the mobilization of desire in terms of the division between male reason and female passion. I begin by focusing on the objectification of the body.

### **The Culture of Anti-Body: Reason and The Suppression of Desire**

Brian Turner's (1984) work on sociology and the body stresses the Western tradition of the mind and body dualism as influenced by religion and science. Western traditions of dualistic thinking - as the opposition between spirit and flesh - has its origins, he says, in Hellenized Christianity. Turner provides a historical description of the body's objectification in this opposition.

The body in Greek thought has been the focus of the struggle between form and desire (between Apollo and Dionysus). Christianity inherited this viewpoint, but darkened it by seeing the flesh as the symbol of the Fallen Man and irrational denial of God. In medieval times, the celebration of the body in festival and carnival came to be a political expression of popular dissent against the dominant literate tradition of the court and the urban centers of social control. Rabelais' confirmation of the primitive and popular language of the body in the tradition of the market place and carnival was thus an affront to the refinement expressed in 'official' literature. Within the sociology of the knowledge, therefore, it is possible to trace a secularization of the body in which the body ceases to be the object of a sacred discourse of flesh to an object within a medical discourse where the body is a machine to be controlled by appropriate scientific regimens. (1984, p. 36)

Derived from this tradition was "the body" as the seat of unreason, passion, and desire. The flesh of our bodies became the symbol of moral corruption. So strongly was the threat of the flesh to Christianity that it named the body as deviant to the correct order of the world, and therefore the flesh had to be subdivided by disciplines, by "bodily order" (Turner, 1984).

Turner traces the shift away from eighteenth-century religious discourse concerning the body to the nineteenth-century scientific discourse of the body. In the former the body was seen as a flesh full of passion and desire destructive to mankind which, therefore had to be controlled and disciplined. In the latter, the body became an object understood in mechanistic terms to be controlled by appropriate scientific regimens. The shift was from maintenance of a healthy body as a religious value, to concern for efficient quantification of the body. The result of this change was a reification and objectification of the body that became a focus of exact calculation. Such change may appear to be liberatory in that it reduces the moral significance of the body, yet, as argued by Adorno (Dialectics of Enlightenment, 1972), at the same time there is an objectification of the body in the desire to control all forms of nature. The notion of enlightenment opens up the drive for objectification and control of nature, both inner (i.e., the body) and outer.

The medical or scientific discourse creates a language which speaks of the body in terms which measure its form, fragments it into parts, and therefore divides up its desires and passions. This division, argues Turner, is not a physiological fact but a cultural construct, and therefore a political act which locates anti-social behavior within the passionate, desirous body. Andrea Dworkin situates the threat

of the sensuous in the duality of mind and body.

To be "reasonable" means to put oneself into a special, rarely happy relationship to the sensuous. "Be Reasonable" means, practically speaking, do not trust your impulses, do not listen to your body, learn control, starting with your own sensuousness. (1987, p. 169)

Turner relates the political implications of the construction of these "anti-body" discourses, from Hellenized Christianity to the Age of Enlightenment, to the distribution of power in relationship to masculine and feminine traits. He takes us beyond oppression of the body in such discourses to the notion of the challenge presented to the social order by the female body. (I will return to this issue in the following chapter).

The contradiction between passion and reason ... is also the vindication of authority which provides the root of social order and social solidarity ... (argues) not simply that the body is culturally constructed in opposition to social authority, but specifically that the female body is the main challenge to continuity of property and power. The division between female passion and male reason is thus the cultural source of patriarchy. (1984, p. 37)

Turner views the division between female passion and male reason as a spatial distribution between the public and private realm. The private space in modern society is characterized by intimacy and emotionality while the public space is characterized by formality, neutrality and impersonality. Turner (p. 38) provides a schema which illustrates a spatial division between passions (in the private sphere) and reasons (in the public sphere).

**Private**

desire  
 female  
 informal  
 affectivity  
 particularity  
 diffusion  
 hedonism  
 consumption

**Public**

reason  
 male  
 formal  
 neutrality  
 universality  
 specificity  
 asceticism  
 production

The split between private life and labor, consumption and production is a necessary social mechanism to alleviate the dissatisfactions arising from the frustration and boredom of work (Shapiro, 1989, p. 56). Shapiro argues that consumerism has developed as an ideal at the same time as the older religious belief in the work ethic declined. Work is no longer thought about in terms of creative production, but rather as a purely instrumental activity - a means rather than an end of human action. The repressive realm of consumption, notes Shapiro, still needs to be distinguished from the equally coercive realm of production.

While the latter contains the ascetic moment of bourgeois culture (the work ethic, impulse restraint, duty, delayed gratification), consumption, with its demand for happiness and self-fulfillment contains a critical element in its focus. Consumption ... still means a protest against asceticism of traditional bourgeois culture.

In this division as noted by Turner and Shapiro, life is divided into two realms. In the public world of production, there is work as the social struggle for existence and the transformation of nature. In the private realm is the personal domain of consumption - leisure and human fulfillment, and the quest for meaning (Shapiro,

p. 55). The combination of the trivialization of labor and the separation of struggle for meaning into the private realm has played havoc with any attempt to achieve an education for human liberation. Without an understanding of genuine self-awareness or critical consciousness the assertion of human liberation is turned back on itself as a means of further repression and accommodation (Shapiro, p. 100). The body/ subject succumbs physically and emotionally under the ideological force of capitalism. (I return to describe in greater detail the relationship between the body/subject and production work in the following chapter in the section on **The Making of the Oppressed Body**).

In this social division, between the domain of being in the private/home and public/work space, Turner notes, there is also a sexual division. Divided sexually, the public/producer body is "asceticised" in contrast to the desires of the private/consumer body. Situating the female/private body in contradiction to the male/public body sets up a struggle over the nature of desire. Turner suggests that under the public/production realm bodily desires can become trapped by the dominant consciousness. He states, "Knowledge produced desire in order to control it." (p. 48). Bringing together McLaren's "modes of production" and "modes of desire" with Turner's division of male reason and female passion, I will sketch out what this might mean in conjunction with the objectification of the female body.

The public/producer culture dominates the social and economic reproduction of desires through the images of those desires as commodified bodies and other objects. Luce Irigaray writes:

The trade that organizes patriarchal societies takes place exclusively among men. Women, signs, goods, currency, all pass from one man to another... (1981, p. 107)

Frigga Haug analyses the importance attached to the female body in the production of ideological subjugation: "The woman as woman owes her body to a man; as a female human being, she owes him her character. A man, as man, looks to her body; as human being, to her character." (1987, p. 107). The woman's body is positioned in a way which becomes the focal point for the construction of identity. Women have come to construct their identities in relationship to socially constructed notions of the "beautiful female body." What results from this is a consumer society where the female-being ingests this oppressive descriptions of her own subjectivity. She becomes co-conspirator to her own oppression as she unquestioningly accepts as her being that which has been constituted through the dominant public discourse of male desire. Frigga Haug refers to this kind of being as being-as-object. Haug explains.

It has frequently been suggested that advertising and fashion influence women in what they wear. In this way, it is said, desires are manipulated; or rather, the perpetual creation of new needs leads women to concern themselves with their bodies, their appearance. As far as the activities of the textile industry are concerned, this assumption is clearly to some extent justified. It does not, however, explain why women actually yield to these industries' whispered promises. What causes consumers to purchase any given product is not real use value, but the aesthetics of the commodity as it impinges upon the sensuality of the purchaser. Advertising is only the promise of use value. Desires, hopes and longings are projected upon the surface of the commodity. (1987, p. 134-135)

One such desire of women is to be desired by men. The desired image, as such, is projected in the social and economic imagery of television, magazines, billboards, books; and more so, by the activities of buying, wearing, exercising, and the fashions of women that form and repress their bodies.

In concluding this chapter I must return to argue for the contextualization of knowledge as a question and reflection upon issues of existence. As attempted to be shown to place desire into critical and self-conscious reflection necessitates a language that might disclose the terrain of struggle, conflicts, and contradictions in our lived experiences and self-constitution. Such critique warrants a radical investigation of dominant consciousness, wherein lies the creation and maintenance of a specific form of human existence. Marcuse (1969) argues that the body most sharply experiences the pain of domination and repression of authentic human desire knowing this in relationship to its memory of happiness and self-fulfillment. Understanding of the forming of subjectivity requires us to go beyond epistemological concerns, and to address issues of power, ideology and economics. Theoretical discussions must embrace oppressive and resistive elements expressed through, and demonstrated in, the human body.

Human beings form their identities with and through the somatic messages transmitted by the culture in which they live. Without a concrete language of the body we can become lost in a theorizing that is dominated by a masculine discourse and sanctioned within the "objective" language of the technology.

To call for a concrete language of the body in the Heideggerian sense, where being, truth and existence are a single event, points to the impossibility of



designating any one particular discourse or single logic for understanding multiple experiences or realities. Behind any attempt to do so lie issues of dogma, reification, and power. We exist within heterogeneous structures. Recalling the body as a locator of the truth of existence, or the reality we live, brings together both reason and sensuality, intellect and perception, mind and body. The struggle to dwell in a discourse of our bodily existence opens us to the struggle to give words to experiential knowledge. Expressed in this is a discourse of subjugated knowledge.

"Subjugated knowledges" is a term used by Foucault to identify a whole group of knowledges that have been either disregarded in an all-encompassing theoretical framework, or erased in a triumphal history of ideas (Sharon Welch, 1985). These knowledges lie beneath the cognitive, scientific-rational ordering of empirical knowledge. One example of such knowledge is that which pertains to the body. Nowhere is this so clear as in the subjugation of women's bodies in the dominant masculine discourse.

Personal knowledge, body politics, and hierarchical - patriarchal discourses are all central issues to the feminist movement. Foucault's work has made apparent what women knowingly live - power is always present in the body because it is coterminous with the conditions of social relations. All relations are social relations, and therefore, contains issues of power.

Foucault (1977, pp. 219-220) states; "The real strength in the women's liberation movement is not that of having laid claim to the specificity of their sexuality and the rights pertaining to it, but that they have actually departed from

the discourse conducted within the apparatuses of sexuality." Difficulty arises in creating words to express a foregone text. New "truths" must begin to pass the lips of the oppressed. With the spoken known of body experiences comes the explosion of the old, abstract discourse. Death of the old discourse must occur before there can be new beginnings. Helen Cixous writes.

A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments; there's no other way. There's no room left if she's not a he. If she's a her-she, it's in order to smash everything, to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the "truth" with laughter. (1981, p. 316)

Discourse, power and knowledge are inseparable. Throwing off the "old property crust" means first addressing the oppressed nature of a banished knowledge marked on, through, and within the body.

In the chapter following, I will address issues of oppression and liberation as they can be defined in and by the body. It is these issues that must be present in a pedagogy concerned with critical reflection in the context of the struggle for human liberation.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY OF THE BODY

This chapter focuses upon developing a discourse through which we come to understand human life as it is structured through and by the sensate experiences of the body. In so doing, I attempt to address the concerns expressed in the preceding chapters where I articulate the absence of an adequate language of the body in critical pedagogy. Also in this chapter I begin to lay the ground work for a process of hermeneutic inquiry into "body memories," or an existential knowledge of the social relations and structures we live. I draw from the work of Michelle Foucault, John Berger, Brian Fay, Peter Solterdijk, Andrea Dworkin, Frigga Haug and other feminist theorists.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of the implications of the Enlightenment Era in its effects on the separation of objective and subjective knowledge, and upon the ways we construct meaning. The questions brought to the fore here are concerned with alienation from our human capacities for creativity in the context of our life-world.

In the second section, **Critical Theory and Analytical Thinking**, I briefly return to restate my arguments in Chapter One which refer to the limited nature of discourse in Critical Pedagogy in its relationship to the body. This brings us back to the issue of education and moves my discussion forward into the third section, **The Making of the Oppressed Body: Towards A Critical Discourse**. It is in

this section that I draw upon feminist literature in an attempt to provide clear examples of the ways in which our bodies are culturally marked or inscribed. Identities, as culturally inscribed, are discussed in terms of race, gender, and class. These cultural descriptions are utilized to reveal powerful ideological forces which pre-exist our own presence in the world. Once these cultural effects are established my study describes the ways in which subjects become complicit with, and collaborators in, the dominant ideology.

In the final section, **The Body In Resistance**, feminist literature problematizes the masculine discourse in the way that it separates and devalues the sensual. My assertion is the necessity to recall and remember the knowledge of the body and to recognize a mode of theorization which is dominated by masculine logic, or the prevalence of "knowing as seeing." Resistance to such a "bodyless" theorization is reviewed in relationship to issues of discourse, personal history, existential memories, and "kynical" resistance. These issues, I will suggest, signify a state of resistance to the modern social condition. I suggest that the importance is in recognizing the body as the material base in which oppression occurs and forms of resistance can be identified. In addition it is suggested that we may recognize here the possibilities in human and social transformation.

### **Appearances Are Only Half The Language**

Enlightenment, which strives for the reification and objectification of knowledge, reduces the world of the physiognomic to silence. The price of objectivity is the loss of closeness.

Peter Sloterdijk (1987, p. 140)

To lose closeness is to also lose the memory of touch. Enlightenment has left its mark as it has hidden the knowledge of human experience in the separation of objective and subjective knowledge. The refusal to acknowledge the separation and the effects of such separation keeps us ignorant of our own knowledge about our lives and the world in which we live. We remain ignorant of our own being. Being ignorant is being dead, as Dworkin contends.

Being dead is being ignorant...Remaining ignorant about oneself through a life of inevitable experience is hard, it requires that one refuse to know anything about the world around us ... White people especially do not want to know ... Black people are unable to refuse to know... (1987, p. 58)

The refusal to know, to feel the closeness of life, is the "privilege" of ignorance. Truth as existence is harder to bear than ignorance, and yet ignorance is valued more because the status quo depends on it. Knowing that claims truth as existence demands a critical intervention into the experiences of life felt and held in the body. It demands a choice for human intimacy no longer able to remain detached or neutral. What is to be saved is the ability to touch another human being or be touched by that person in the larger domain of humanity. Touching in this sense goes beyond the physical act of touching to the metaphoric use of "touching" as that which signifies the ability to experience our human feelings in personal relationships. More importantly, it is to provide a concept through which we understand how social relations and social structures intimately "touch to form" the being of our own lives. The sensibility makes space for the feelings we live and for recognizing the intimate relationship between experiential knowing and

intellectual knowing.

Touching speaks to our human potential for making choices. A sensibility of care and concern manifest in words of warmth, tenderness and love. It is the antithesis of abstraction. The relevance of touching is signified by Dworkin.

This ability to touch and be touched is at stake always in every choice toward or away from knowing anything at all about the world or oneself; and this ability to touch or be touched is simply the ability to love, so hard to save because hope is so hard to save, especially when it must coexist with knowledge. (p. 59)

As John Berger (1984) notes, naming the intolerable is where hope lies. Appearances are only half the language. Our intellectual inquiries must try to reunite our separatist notions of knowing with narratives constituted in the flesh and blood character of the lives we live. Within these stories is where we find meaning.

We have possibilities, and we make up meaning as we go along. These meanings we create or learn do not exist in our heads, in ineffable ideas. Our meanings also exist in our bodies. (Dworkin, p. 165)

Bodies exist in time. They are the materiality of our existence carrying past and future through the present. And it is in the present "what is," Heidegger reminds us, that we hold both what we claim as history and name as possibility for the future. Imprinted on our skins and embedded in our passions are the stories of those who have been oppressed, resisted, both lived and died for a more human existence. E.L. Doctorow, in his book Daniel, has Grandma (who grew up in Russia as both Jew and peasant) talking to Daniel about **the oppressions for**

**those who are passionate in their love for the world. She says:**

In any one day, it is possible to derive joy from being and be nourished by it. In a filthy room with cold, broken windows and the clatter of your oppression in the streets, it's possible. And starving, with your teeth rotting in your mouth, and age like lead in your bones, and your eyes shattered with the horror of what you have seen - all together, and with the madness of your children thrown in, I call it God. And there is a traditional liturgy which is lovely in itself, but which reminds you too that others born and died know this feeling also. So I sing to myself in that language. And my curses are my love for them whom I curse for existing at the mercy of life and God and for the dust they will allow themselves to become for having been born. And my complicity in their being, the fruit of my womb, that I could have tricked them this way outrages me. Unable to stay in their presence for my love of them which they do not understand, and my terrible fear of their blasphemy, and their tampering with all the deep, intricate solderings of the universe. Do you begin to understand? I am speaking of the only form of ecstasy allowed to old ladies. It begins with the fear of not being able to breathe. **And they inherit from me, too, as you do, that excess of passion, that shimmering fullness of stored life which always marks the victim. What we have, too much life in each of us, is what the world hates most. We offend. We stink with life. Our hearts make love to the world not gently. We are brutal with life and our brutality is called suffering [emphasis added]. (1971, p. 82)**

As quoted in Daniel, "In any one day it is possible to derive joy from being, and be nourished by it." - the remembrance of this possibility of the pleasure of living is called hope - and is called God. **To live this hope passionately offends with the smell of bodies that live in all their fullness.**

We are saturated with the smell of life; policed because of our passions to be free, to be treated with dignity and equality. Internally occupied by the specified ways of being, we fight our own collaboration with repression and domination. Unconscious of being an occupied territory, we fall prey to the socio-economic war. The physical manifestations in the body become the guide to social ordering.

Living becomes an objectified existence in its implicit acceptance of living unreflectively and unquestioningly. This seamless language hides the ways in which we are coerced into collaboration. Whatever the compliances we are socialized into, there remains within our bodies something that resists full occupation. As humans we try to give meaning to our experiences, some significance that they might have for us. We construct meaning through a re-personalization of what matters to us, that our lives have purpose. Dworkin (1987) contends that without the struggle to find meaning in our experiences **we give up the most important dimension of what it is to be human - creativity.**

Alienation from the human capacity to find or invent meaning is a denial of our freedom. Without the ability to make conscious choices we limit our humanity and abstract out creativity and the moral choices implied in these creations. Yet, to replace alienation with a struggle for meaning requires a "movement." Peter Gabel (1990, p. 46) suggests; "What moves is social desire itself, as it partially breaks free of the denial that has enveloped it." Desire as the gap between "what is" and "what ought to be" can only exist in relationship to imagination; and can only become a movement with realization that the individual does not precede community (Greene, 1990). The need to understand desire itself cannot precede without a much fuller recognition of the way the body is situated in, and constructed by, the culture.



### **Critical Theory and Analytical Thinking**

To reflect, critically understand, and give meaning to our existence for the purpose of moving towards a society in which there is a greater degree of self and collective empowerment, and the affirmation of human dignity is the basis for Critical Pedagogy. Chapter One, however, argued that Critical Pedagogy had emphasized rational reflection as the sole vehicle for human liberation and effectively excluded a discourse of the body. At this point I will return to briefly discuss and critique the development of Critical Pedagogy in recalling the purpose of this work.

A theory of critique was at the center of the theoretical movement known as the Frankfurt School of Social Research. From Marxist explanations of base and super structure to Antonio Gramsci's hegemonic consciousness, to Foucault's theory of power and knowledge, there remains a sensibility in Critical theory which continues to emphasize the rational. Self and social reflectiveness provided the over-all schema from which the individual could come to understand the relationship between existence and the socio-politico-economic structures. Foucault introduced the body into the discussion in terms of power relationships revealing the significance of the body as the site for social manipulation and control (1977). The recurring notion in these theories is one of intellectual enlightenment. Reasoning becomes the primary means for human liberation. Brian Fay references critical science's "important ingredient" of 'idealism' in its conceptualization of a social theory of human behavior.

'Idealism' is a complex and even ambiguous concept. In the context of critical science, it consists of three specific claims: first, that it is people's ideas (or, more accurately, their having these ideas) which solely cause social behavior; second, that in order for people to alleviate their dissatisfaction, all they have to do is to change their ideas about who they are and what they are doing; and third, that people are willing to listen to rational analysis of their lives and to act on these analyses. (1987, p. 24)

From these rationally based theories there developed a number of criticisms. Among the most important of these is the assertion that they represent a masculine orientation. Feminist theorists such as Elizabeth Ellsworth (1990), Frances Maher (1987), Rhonda Hammer (1989), Michelle Fine (1988), Kathleen Weiler (1988), and Patti Lather (1986) write about issues concerning the effects of a masculine discourse on the development of critical pedagogy. One example is given in Frances Maher's article which critiques the liberatory model of pedagogy in its disengagement with the particular, which is at all times connected to experiential knowing, and therefore the body/subject.

Liberation models of teaching, and Marxist feminism as well, often fail to attend to the role of intimacy, of feelings for particular people in particular situations. (1987, p. 97)

Phillip Corrigan strongly reflects upon the institution of schooling in relationship to the body and the need for educational theory to address the "forgotten body."

All I am trying to say is that bodies matter in schooling. They/we are the subjects who are taught, disciplined, measured, evaluated, examined, passed (or not), assessed, graded, hurt, harmed, twisted, re-worked, applauded, praised, encouraged, enforced, coerced, condensed ... **To have around volumes of educational theory (however radical) that never mentions bodies, and their differentiation, seems to me now, slightly stupid** [emphasis

added]. In a more extended emphasis, bodies may be what (who) is being schooled because by now - I hope - we cannot so easily separate minds, psyches, emotions off from bodies. (1988, p. 153)

I have argued in these sections that the living body can be seen as the material which holds the experiential knowledge of one's life, and that reasoning as a process comes from the interaction of mind and body. Also, I have suggested that touching can be seen as a metaphor for the extension of human consciousness, and language as the abstraction of touch. I have called attention to the impoverishment of a rationalistic discourse which alone is incapable of liberating human beings. Such a discourse still dominates critical forms of pedagogy. My intention later in this chapter is to call the reader's attention to the relationship between the devaluing of what we know in our bodies and the social problems which arise from this. In so doing, I am attempting to develop a discourse of the body which can give meaning to our human experiences as felt in the "everyday" existence of our life-world. I wish to turn now to speak more specifically to issues of oppression and liberation, making concrete the body as the bearer of both.

### **The Making of the Oppressed Body: Towards A Critical Discourse**

The skin is a line of demarcation, a periphery, the fence, the form, the shape, the first clue to identity in a society (for instance, color in a racist society), and, in purely physical terms, the formal precondition for being human. (Dworkin, 1987, p. 25)

Andrea Dworkin captures the intimate and powerful dialectic which connects skin to society. Body in all its materiality is socially marked and identified as black,

woman, handicapped, old, lower class, fat - as the language of "other." The first clue to identity is the skin you wear. Dworkin continues.

It is a thin veil of matter separating the outside from the inside. It is what one sees and what one covers up; it shows and it conceals; it hides what is inside. (p. 25)

The skin exposes our nationalities; it is implicated in the forming of gender and marks the experiences of the "times" we live. To critically interpret what can be seen in the body of a Southern mill worker is to understand something about the life of that worker. The walk is often distinct: stiff and unyielding, shoulders falling forward, back rounded placing the head slightly forward causing the weight of the body to create an off balance effect. The legs seem to be continually trying to "catch-up" with the forward falling movement attempting to make a stance, and yet being continually pulled off balance. Between upper and lower body is the gut - the place of connection between "what one thinks" and "where one stands." The gut of the body can be emaciated exposing the fleshlessness as the outward signs of the inward emptiness. Eyes focus downward attempting to locate their "grounding," trying to locate the body/subject. Other times the eyes project a downward gaze in associating "not seeing" with "being seen." And there are darting eyes that depict the fear of "being caught" in the authoritarian gaze. This is only one description, recognizing that there are individual differences, and other "body portraits" which could be critically described (e.g., the floor supervisor, plant manager, or front desk receptionist) with each giving insights to "the place" of our bodies in society and the appearances we take on and within them in relationship

to our social and economic status.

Represented in these bodies is a way of life made manifest in the skeletal structure, and in the flesh and skin which cover it, signs of oppressive lives that are consequent of an economic system which is parasitic on the flesh and blood of the workers. This system relies on disempowerment through hierarchical structures where workers retain an insignificant amount of control over their life energies. Movement is mechanized, regulating bodily needs and life schedules to a pattern which fits the production time clocks. And minds are restricted to thinking in a discourse of mechanical reproduction and technical efficiency. Don Johnson writes concerning how one's life work shapes one's body and perceptions.

A worker on an assembly line or a secretary in an office, performing only one kind of action throughout the day, begin to get a sense of their bodies as machines with a narrow range of movement and little feeling. The reduction of the body's capacities to the specific range required by the habitual work correspondingly diminishes the scope of one's perceptions. (1983, p. 78)

Johnson (p. 80) calls this kind of work the "technology of alienation" - a way of applying the techniques to train people to be disconnected from their sensual authority. The body/subject is controlled in a framework structured to alienate her/him from her/his own sense of authority in making choices about how she/he live her/his lives. We experience feelings of ourselves in situations. In some instances we might say, "This feels right" or "I don't feel good about this." Turning our sensory powers to how we feel within situations, as Dorothee Soelle suggests, brings us back in touch with our own capability to make moral choices about what

feels right or wrong.

Johnson (p. 80) calls a second way of integrating technique "the technology of authenticity" - a way that encourages people to develop their own sense of authority. Without such sensual authority we can become muscularly rigid and perceptually dulled. Image a man in uniform: molded to the shape of authority he stands erect as a symbol of hierarchy and a phallo-centric culture, expanded chest and jutting chin denoting aggressive power, stomach drawn inward tightening against any "gut" feeling of morality, legs spread apart taking up the space that he feels is rightfully his, the eyes stare coldly straight ahead acknowledging the impossibility of being directed into an alternative direction. The total image is one of hardness and coldness framed in a uniform that gives him identity and self-worth.

To feel one's own body as oppressed and as the oppressor, is to live with, and within, the body in full recognition of its social and economic structuring. It would be to make concrete one's own existence, and in so doing disclose the oppressive nature of a system where only a few have the privilege of power. It would be to see "what is" of the skins that we wear. The skin bears the content of our lives. The meeting point between outside and inside, Dworkin writes, is the skin.

The skin is separation, individuality, the basis for corporeal privacy and also the point of contact for everything outside of itself. It is the conductor for all feeling. (p. 25)

My skin places me within a specific race, gender, and class. I can be identified as a white, middle class female by what I buy to put on my body (clothes, jewelry,

cosmetics), how I walk, the way I "carry my body," the way I hold a fork, or by the way I show confidence, the eye contact I make with the person speaking to me. My position is privileged being "European white" and oppressed in "being female" under the same Euro-centric framing. **I know I have a body, but do I know I am being some-body?** The distinction is critical. To be some-body is to remember that humans are not only active beings; they are also embodied, traditional, historical, and embedded (Fay, p. 209). No amount of knowledge, intelligence, curiosity, or reflection can enable humans to control all of these factors. As Fay argues (p. 207) the power of critical social science to "set" people free is limited. Changing consciousness is not enough, but is rather a beginning for understanding the complex and contradictory nature which constitutes our being. Dworkin contends that it is the skin which is this existential marking between self and world.

Every time the skin is touched, one feels. All feeling passes through it, outside to inside...The skin is our human mask; it is what one can touch of another person, what one sees, how one is seen ... It is both identity and sex ... what one is and what one feels in the realm of the sensual, being and passion, where the self meets the world - **intercourse being** [emphasis added], ultimately, the self in the act of meeting the world. (pp. 25-26)

To know our "skinned-over" bodies is to understand, as Dworkin names it - **"intercourse being"**. The insertion is of ourselves into the social order. We are coded in the beginning by the color of our skin, sexuality, and the social class of our families. As I was once told by a friend, "You know you could dress Jane up, but she would still look the same." In this statement is the implicit belief that Jane

is betrayed by her body which has been socially inscribed within a historical text written before her birth. Covering Jane's body with another image cannot hide her social markings. They are too deep.

One's skin takes on a social function - even naked, one is not purely naked; social identity becomes a new, tough, impermeable skin; one's nakedness is covered over by layers of social self and emotional pain, rituals and rules, habits of being that are antithetical to any pure experience of being. **Questions of what is human, what is being, suggest questions of what is naked, what is sexed [emphasis added].** (Dworkin, p. 26)

One's own body is the meeting point between private and public. Fostered in an ideology of individualism is the belief that one's own body is one's own, though in everyday life the power of the state constantly reasserts its control - especially among women (Haug and Foucault). For example, if I am physically assaulted the attacker may be brought to legal judgment, or if I am murdered there will be legal inquiry. Yet, if I am raped, I may be accused of provoking it by being a certain way - more commonly referred to as "asking for it"; or if I become pregnant I may or may not have the choice to bring life into the world. Bodily rights are regulated by the State regulations, and not only are these rights stated in relation to injury and pregnancy, but also to a host of other relations: in law, marriage, the family, sexual relations, pornography, censorship, prostitution, and regulations about hygiene and contagious diseases. But as Foucault argues, constitution of the body takes place through the operations of power that exist not only in the state, but throughout the society and its institutions. This process is what Frigga Haug (1987) calls "sexualization" - the gendered constitution of the body. Sexualization



does not simply refer to the sexuality of the body, rather it encompasses the totality of how one is constructed within social/cultural norms.

### **Being – Skinned Alive**

To work within a particular economic structure is to be inserted into a particular economic and social history which appropriates the productive energies for specific purposes. John Berger accentuates the body inscriptions of five Turkish workers in the following description.

Five of the men are workers...One is bald, one has curly hair, two are thin and wiry, one is broad-shouldered and well-covered. All are wearing skimpy, cheap trousers and jackets. Those clothes bear the same relation to the suits of the bourgeois as the capital's shantytown, where the five live, bear to the villas with French furniture where the bosses and merchants live. Yet, with their clothes taken off, in a public bath, a police or army officer would have little difficulty in identifying them as workers. Even if the five half-closed their eyes so as to mask their expression, so as to pretend to a commendable indifference, their social class would still be evident ... It is as if a court, at the moments of their conception had sentenced them all to have their heads severed from their necks at the age of fifteen. When the time came, they resisted, as all workers resist, and their heads remained on their shoulders. But the tension and obstinancy of that resistance has remained, and still remains, visible - there between the nape of the neck and the shoulder blades. Most workers in the world carry the same physical stigma: a sign of how the labor power of their bodies has been wrenched away from their heads, where their thoughts and imaginings continue, but deprived now of the possession of their own days and working energies.

Berger continues:

For the five in the wood-panelled room, resistance is more than a reflex, more than the muscles' primitive refusal of what the body knows to be an injustice - because what its effort is continually creating is immediately and irredemably taken out of its hands. Their

resistance has mounted, and entered their thoughts, their hopes, their explanations of the world. The five heads, whose eyes pierce me, have declared their bodies, not only resistant, but militant. (1984, p. 17)

The men have claimed the injustice of what their bodies know and termed it intolerable. Naming the intolerable is what must pre-exist change. In this naming the existential issues are brought to examination. William Pinar (1981, p. 180) suggests that when one is psychologically 'present,' rather than emotionally numbed, one can attune oneself to a situation, and thus become conscious of how life-history, commitments and assumptions operate in our experience of that situation. Pinar argues that as one becomes conscious of them one can become free of them. The articulation of situations is what focuses or attunes us to our life-world allowing the problematic to be revealed. Pinar continues, "The situation comes to form through us, and thus our sensibilities do not merely precondition knowledge; they make it possible."

Attunement, in Heidegger's work, returns understanding to an ontological one as understood from one's being-in-the-world. It can occur only in the context of individual-social relationship, rather than one which is abstract and reduced as a technical problem. Again it is truth that presents itself in the existential situation; not a final truth but rather an unfolding of the lived experience. Knowledge occurs in the context of everyday life (Pinar). Perception, interpretation, and articulation reveals to us the knowledge of life as "the out-pressing of what we have taken in and contained" (Keleman, p. 130). "Taking in" and "containing" suggest the bodily holding of past experiences.

In summary, the capacity to articulate comes with an understanding of the human condition as formed by past experiences, and with future visions. Memories of life where one is able to touch, be touched, feel and respond, become the ever nagging memory within the human body, the desire for happiness, for intimacy of the human touch as experienced in flesh and blood. Vincent Geoghegan refers to Marcuse's work when he writes:

Such memory is a spur to change; it is an actual and powerful goad to re-create the lost conditions of happiness, for 'the past continues to reclaim the future; ... (1987, p. 102)

The communion is between past, present, and future in a unifying contextual knowledge which breaks down the barriers held in the ever present now. Berger writes (1984, p. 18), "The time of the torturers is agonizingly in the present." What is significant here is the value placed upon critical understanding of history as something which carries with it the past and possibilities for the future human existence. Inherent in this kind of understanding is that wo/man is not a passive recipient of this world and can act to change it. This knowledge is a threat to the status quo, or to what Berger reminds us of as the "torturers of the present." To begin to question the present opens the possibility to desire something different.

### **A Political Collaboration: Giving Up Freedom for Compliance**

To look to the future with hope is to desire something different from what is. Yet, critical theorists argue that the absence of the dissonance between "what presently is" and "what can be in the future" leads to an unconscious collaboration

and compliance with the dominant ideology which structures one's being. To understand the female body in the present culture is to critically apprehend the way oppression is not merely imposed, but participated in by those who are oppressed.

Feminists write about being female in the context of power over the female body by men. Dworkin (p. 150) states, "Male power may be arrogant or elegant; it can be churlish or refined: but we exist as persons to the extent that men in power recognize us." This hierarchical organization of power sustains itself in the conceptualization of male activity and female passivity. Helene Cixous charges this conceptualization places women always on the side of passivity, and as other. To be passive is to become a participant in one's own oppression. To be "other" places her in relationship to man as always being "body." Cixous (1981) with other French Feminists, argues that more so than men, women are body. Yet, the life energy of the woman as body is directed toward an image as desired by man. Feminist writers have made clear the objectification of the women's body in the attempt to remake and reshape it into an ornament of desire (Dworkin). The body as object can have pouting lips, silky long hair, enfleshed breasts, provocative eyes, long legs, shapely "ass," and as object be displayed to draw the male gaze towards the center of her sexual being through explicit exaggeration. Her being becomes the physical representation of male desires. Her body speaks the objectification and symbolizes the pleasure, domination, fragmentation, and commodification of the woman's body. Dworkin elaborates on the male objectification of the female body.

Being an object - living in the realm of male objectification - is abject submission, an abdication of the freedom and integrity of the body, its privacy, its uniqueness, its worth in and of itself because it is the human body of a human being...To become object she takes herself and transforms herself into a thing: all freedoms are diminished and she is caged, even in the cage docile, sometimes physically maimed, movement is limited ... (p. 166)

This system of objectification as a strategy of domination is referred to in feminist writing as colonization. The woman takes on the burden, the responsibility, of her own submission, and her own objectification (Dworkin). By internalizing the ideas of what is valued in women (by the dominant male structure), she constructs herself according to those objectified ideas or images. Here is the indication of complicity to this domination. Collaborating with her own submission implies an acceptance of a system which gives her object status. It is an implicit acceptance of less freedom, less power, less dignity - she becomes something less than equal (Dworkin). Hers is a political collaboration in that in the act of collaboration is an acceptance of what Hegel called the "master-slave" relationship. Dworkin (p. 167) contends that there is an initial complicity in the act of confirming oneself as something rather than someone. In this initial complicity there are "the acts of self-mutilation, self-diminishment, and self-reconstruction, until there is no self, no memories. The alienation from worth as a human being is fundamental to female objectification. This alienation is the grounding which undermines the values of human dignity for self and for others. Without knowing one's own human value the possibilities for a sense of human justice or freedom are diminished.

Something happens inside; a human forgets freedom; a human learns obedience; a human, this time a woman, learns how to goose-step the female way. (Dworkin, p. 167)

The act goes beyond complicity to collaboration. Collaboration in this sort requires the undermining of values and dignity - an alienation from worth as a human being to one of exchange value; and therefore, an alienation from human freedom which is deep and destructive. Dworkin continues:

...it destroys whatever it is in us as humans that is creative, that causes us to want to find meaning in experiences, even hard experiences; it destroys in us that which wants freedom whatever the hardship of attaining it. (p. 168)

As numerous studies have made clear objectification and oppression of women finds its parallel in the life of all human beings described as "other" - foreign born workers, Jews, blacks - any human being that is dehumanized for the sake of another. Compliance and collaboration with such efforts strip away human capacities to imagine a different relationship to others and to our world.

### **Cause and Effect Relationship: Delineated Boundaries for Human Identity and Desires**

We mourn our lack of desire for a different relationship with the world.  
(Haug, p. 269)

Haug's statement speaks to women who struggle with the hegemonic relationship between themselves and the world. What is to be understood is that we can never be outside of our own social construction or the dominant

consciousness which is embedded in our very subjectivity. Women, in capitalist culture, are limited, restricted and reduced as their bodies and senses are appropriated by either economic or sexual language. As such, attentions of women are turned toward their bodies (i.e., women are constantly bombarded with advertising directed toward "make-overs" - "if you only buy this product, or do this to your skin, or change your hair color or style you too can be more beautiful, more sexy, or more likely to get the job or raise you want - overall the message is, "if you buy this you can become this.") Women are made to constantly confront their own imperfect bodies. Something is to be hidden (cottage-cheese thighs), slimmed down (fat legs), toned-up (flabby tummy), or criticized (being too short). The boundaries of this ordering of existence reek with oppression and subordination, and are shot through with questions about the delineated boundaries of human identity. Internalizing the "norms" or standards of being a beautiful woman, and therefore a valuable being, does more than produce desired images. There is also an acceptance of a particular identity and a particular relationship to others. One can become business-like, sexy, motherly, punk, conservative, athletic, girlish, sophisticated, intellectual, liberal or "loose," all informed by these socially constructed images. What is revealed are the heteronomous structures that enclose the body (Haug, 1987). Character is assimilated into social images; the resulting character appears "real" or "natural" - the "natural" you. Haug defines this process as a relation of cause and effect. She states:

There is a mode of individualisation specific to women; it operates above all through the field of sexuality. We are all familiar with the fashion magazines urging us to 'make the best' of your skin type, facial type, and so on; the implicit inference here is that a given type is what we are - and not, for example, that there are long processes at work through which that type is made. (p. 203)

Haug is naming this cause and effect relationship as one which becomes internalized by women, accepted as inherent and defined as an essence. These socially constituted norms and types of women are ingested through a process Haug terms as auto-naturalization. Sexualization of the woman's body is inseparable from the process of individualization. Haug's language in some ways may appear deterministic but she forcefully makes the point the way women are subjected to manipulation through social images.

Concluding this section I reflect upon Foucault's work which premises sexuality as neither fixed nor ahistorical. Through feminist work, as well as, critical and postmodern theorists we are better able to transcend the knowledge of sexual socialization to question the external ordering of sexuality located within social relations. Thus what becomes possible is understanding the ordering as something not fixed, susceptible to change, and capable of transformation. In becoming critical, it becomes possible to view sexuality as an ideology - in other words, as a complex system "...through which individuals socialize themselves from the bottom up" (Haug, p. 207).

McLaren (1989) defines "cultural tatooing" as a process in which the body corporeally embeds the ideology of that culture. Body - recognized as sociocultural inscription - becomes a transmitter of the elements of that ideology



when they are "pressed" into the flesh as the structural values we live. From this "pressed" condition the body/subject must make a conscious decision to re-form itself as a free being. Below I continue the discussion of "cultural tatooing" in reference to the **Body In Resistance**.

### **The Body in Resistance**

#### **The Corporeality of Language**

Feminists writers suggest "writing the body" which has an attentiveness to include the body and its impulses. This means including the knowledge of the body in the language of the mind. Ann Albright suggests that:

Isn't the final goal of writing to articulate the body? For me the sensual juxtaposition of words has one function: to liberate a living paste, to liberate matter. (1989, p. 35)

Chantal Chawaf, with other French feminists, struggles against varied forms of exploitation and against forms of domination through a process which focuses upon putting feeling, breathing, living bodies of women back into language. Chawaf writes:

Linguistic flesh has been puritanically repressed. Abstraction has starved the language, but words must die. They have a sensorial quality. Their role is to develop consciousness and knowledge by liberating our unconscious as well as bringing back hope. (1981, p.177)

Her call for women is to reject the "fleshless" language in order to arise from oppression. The feminist language must materialize through the rediscovered

body.

Another French feminist, Luce Irigaray, cautions about the return to the body when she writes (1981 p. 99), "Female sexuality has always been theorized within masculine parameters ... Women's desire most likely does not speak the same language as man's desire, and it probably has been covered over by a logic that has dominated the West since the Greeks." To problematize the masculine discourse and its possession over the female body, through a sexualization process that objectifies the body under the "prevalence of the gaze", returns us to the relationship between ways of thinking and ways of being. Simply stated, the question that concerns us is the way individual lives are dominated by the prevalent form of knowing; that is the form which has structured "seeing" as knowing. Irigaray contends that this masculine logic is in opposition to a feminine relational way of knowing; a way of knowing which is embodied as touch.

In this logic the prevalence of the gaze, discrimination of form, and individualization of form is particularly foreign to female eroticism. Woman finds pleasure more in touch than in sight ... (p. 101)

Yet, the mode of exchange that organizes a standard for human pleasure and desire is regulated by the masculine mode of desire. As postmodern thinkers such as Foucault and Lyotard have asserted, this mode focuses upon objectified images constituted through "sight," rather than touch. For women questions arise, such as, "How can a female-object begin to liberate her own human desires without an immense upheaval of the established market and merchandising economic system in, by and for men?" and "How can the move be made from abstract seeing to

concrete touching?"

Marguerite Duras strikes out at the slow dying masculine - based knowledge system.

Men are regressing everywhere, in all areas ... The capacity on which men judge intelligence is still the capacity to theorize. It has been under attack for a centuries. It ought to be crushed by now, it should lose itself in a reawakening to the senses, blind itself, and be still. (1981, p. 111)

Duras' anger is directed toward the continuing use of the "old ways of theorizing" to recount and relate to new situations. For it is in these "old" paradigms that distance and objectify, that other forms of knowing are suffocated.

### **Oppression Is A Collective Situation**

These feminists represent a movement that protests the indignities projected onto the image of the female body, and that pleads for women to speak out from their oppressed position by re-writing, re-speaking, and re-positioning themselves in a history yet to be heard. They recognize the necessity and possibility for human beings to be jolted out of embeddedness, to be interrupted from routinized behaviors, and to respond with the desires which inform us of our human need for touch, relationship, and love. The female body can only be released from its masculine ownership through awareness by both men and women. To connect these issues to the larger problems of humanity makes them political issues and reduces the possibility that they become coopted by society as specifically women's problems. Arlette Laguiller writes:

Feminism, except on very limited issues (abortion) cannot bring together all women in common struggle. Class oppression is stronger...I have never known women who had emancipated themselves on the woman question before they had emancipated themselves on the political question. (1981, p. 123)

Human beings produce their lives collectively. The issue of the "objectified body" as an oppressive social element is not only an issue for women, but also for industrial workers. To address feminist issues is to address issues of the collective social production in which modes of subjective appropriation can be generalized. Christine Delphy (1981, p. 198), in recognizing the relationship of individual experience as set within social relations, states that feminism is first of all a social movement, and that oppression has to be the starting point for explanation of human history. This then becomes a materialist liberation as explanations cannot be limited to any one oppression, or leave untouched any part of reality, any domain of knowledge, any aspect of the world. Delphy argues that "feminism - as-a-movement aims at the revolution of social reality, so feminism - as-a-theory must aim at the revolution of knowledge." (p. 198).

In terms of Critical Pedagogy then, the project of liberation must involve, as feminists argue, a rejection of the prevalent masculine way of knowing, for one which is relationally understood, and grounded in the experiential knowledge of our bodies. To understand personal experiences is to remember and reflect upon these memories in all their social relatedness. Yet we have come to privatize our memories isolating resistant actions from the public realm. In the following I will suggest that without the capacity to critically link the individual to the life-world in terms of social relationships, resistance in any form is limited to an overly

personalized form. As such it produces the contradictions felt in modern consciousness as cynicism, wherein the separation of **the rational** (what we claim as truth), and **the real** (what we experientially know as truth) grow further apart.

### **Resistance to the Confinement**

To understand the lack of social resistance to oppression, one must investigate the determination of such resistance. John Berger (1982) directs one such investigation to the way in which time and history become conflated, and therefore personal experiences are accorded virtually no significance in our knowledge base. Personal histories that are either explained in the "great narratives of human history," or totally silenced (as black history, women's history, and many "others" who have been silenced since their stories would contradict the "official story") can leave no trace of their concrete history or reality (Welch, 1985). The history told is that of the dominating class. The destruction and suffering of the oppressed is a story left untold. History as a discourse does in some complex way shape our world. Berger notes that history, as such, is far from being totally accepted. There remains an opposition to the violence done to the oppressed's subjective experiences, to the superceding of particular personal stories by an "official" one. The impossibility to make one's life experiences "fit" into the discourse of another's history provides the impetus for reaction. Berger writes:

Revolutionary actions are rare. Feelings of opposition to history, however, are constant, even if unarticulated. They often find their expression in what is called private life ... People's opposition to history is a reaction against violence done to them. The violence consists in conflating time and history so that the two become

indivisible, so that people can no longer read their experience of either of them separately. (1982, p. 105)

With the understanding of personal time, as suggested by Berger, being given over to historical time, there is a deep violence done to subjective experience. Yet the living and remembering of certain moments defy the passing of individual, human experience. Such moments include times of achievement, trance, dream, passion, crucial ethical decision - making, near - death, sacrifice, mourning, music, or dance. Memory and the un-doing of historical time go hand-in-hand. Sharon Welch (1985) refers to these as "dangerous memories." Dangerous memory has two dimensions, that of hope and that of suffering (p. 36). Both dimensions demand a personal, and therefore particular, remembering.

Berger (1982) suggests that unfortunately, personal memories are restricted to private thoughts and personal conversations, not to be found in the grand histories of wars, declarations and discoveries. The everyday occurrences of human experience are eliminated with the sweeping motion of an exclusive historical discourse. Humans become subjected to objectified history, a history calculated to meet the special orders of telling the "correct stories" - those which prove the accomplishments and therefore the wisdom of the dominating ideology.

Yet an element of resistance is held within our bodies as emotional resistance in the process of remembering feelings from our past. Maya Angelou captures in her words the poetry of resistance held in the memories of the black woman's body.

### Our Grandmothers

She lay, skin down on the moist dirt,  
the canebrake rustling  
with the whispers of leaves, and  
loud longing of hounds and  
the ransack of hunters crackling the near branches.

She muttered, lifting her head a nod toward freedom,  
I shall not, I shall not be moved.

She gathered her babies,  
their tears slick as oil on black faces,  
their young eyes canvassing mornings of madness.  
Momma, is Master going to sell you  
from us tommorrow?

Yes.

Unless you keep walking more  
and talking less.

Yes.

Unless the keeper of our lives  
releases me from all commandments.

Yes.

And your lives,  
never mine to live,  
will be executed upon the killing of the innocents.  
Unless you match my heart and words,  
saying with me,

I shall not be moved.

In Virginia tobacco fields,  
leaning into the curve  
on Steinway  
planos, along Arkansas roads,  
in red hills of Georgia,  
into the palms of her chained hands, she  
cried against calamity,  
You have destroyed me  
and though I perish daily,

I shall not be moved.

Her universe, often  
 summarized into one black body  
 falling finally from the tree to her feet,  
 made her cry each time in a new voice.  
 All my past hastens to defeat,  
 and strangers claim the glory of my love,  
 Iniquity has bound me to this bed,

yet, I must not be moved.

She heard the names,  
 the swirling ribbons in the wind of history:  
 nigger, nigger bitch, heifer,  
 mammy, property, creature, ape, baboon,  
 whore, hot tail, thing, it.  
 She said, But my description cannot  
 fit your tongue, for  
 I have a certain way of being in this world,  
 and I shall not, I shall not be moved.

No angel stretched protecting wings  
 above the heads of children,  
 fluttering and urging the winds of reason  
 into confusion of their lives.  
 They sprouted like young weeds,  
 but she could not shield their growth  
 from the grinding blades of ignorance, not  
 shape them into symbolic topiaries.  
 She sent them away,  
 underground, overland, in coaches and  
 shoeless.  
 When you learn, teach.  
 When you get, give.  
 As for me,  
 I shall not be moved.

She stood in midocean, seeking dry land.  
 She searched God's face.  
 Assured,  
 she placed her fire of service on the altar, and though  
 clothed in the finery of faith,  
 when she appeared at the temple door,  
 no sign welcomed  
 Black Grandmother. Enter here.



Into the crashing sound,  
 into wickedness, she cried,  
 No one, no, nor no one million  
 ones dare deny me God. I go forth  
 alone, and stand as ten thousand.  
 The Divine upon my right  
 impels me to pull forever  
 at the latch on Freedom's gate.

The Holy Spirit upon my left leads my  
 feet without ceasing into the camp of the  
 righteous and into the tents of the free.

These momma faces, lemon-yellow, plum-purple,  
 honey-brown, have grimaced and twisted  
 down a pyramid of years.  
 She is Sheba and Sojourner,  
     Harriet and Zora,  
     Mary Bethune and Angela,  
     Annie to Zeobia.

She stands  
 before the abortion clinic,  
 confounded by the lack of choices.  
 In the Welfare line,  
 reduced to the pity of handouts.  
 Ordained in the pulpit, shielded  
 by the mysteries.  
 In the operating room,  
 husbanding life.  
 In the choir loft,  
 holding God in her throat.  
 On lonely street corners,  
 hawking her body.  
 In the classroom, loving the  
 children to understanding.

Centered on the world's stage,  
 she sings to her loves and beloveds,  
 to her foes and detractors:  
 However I am perceived and deceived,  
 however my ignorance and conceits,  
 lay aside your fears that I will be undone,

for I shall not be moved. (1990, pp. 33-37)

However powerful memories of actual human experiences are, without the sharing of these stories instances of resistance are lost, and with them possibility for liberation. Welch refers to Mary Daly's work in the description of the interaction between personal and political liberation. Welch writes.

As women share stories of their own lives, a common experience of oppression and resistance is recognized. This politicization gives women the courage to persist in resistance, recognizing their difficulties have not only individual basis but a social and political bases as well. (1985, p. 41)

Without the communal sharing of life stories, concerns and griefs, the solidarity about which Welch writes cannot develop, and social change can be misdirected and limited.

The interpretation of personal memories is limited when disconnected from its social context. John Berger describes how private photographs intervene in "official history" as a story which remembers the personal experiences of births, deaths, marriages, families and friendships. The attitude is one of private memories as if they exist outside of their historical framing. Given this, private photographs are bound to private space, yet they cannot be destroyed as memories of human life cannot be destroyed.

And so, hundreds of millions of photographs, fragile images, often carried next to the heart or placed by the side of the bed, are used to refer to that which historical time has no right to destroy. (1982, p. 108)

Isolated memories deprive us of collective autonomy. An illusory realm of privacy remains intact where personal memories float unattached to any critical

understanding of the social forces which structure how we perceive, interpret, and make sense of our lives. In this privatized realm, resistance is left without direction and within itself rebounding inside its confined walls. ("This is a photograph of John in his army uniform, he's Mary's brother. Richard's first born son. He died in the war you know. What a pity.") The power of resistance for social transformation is reduced in the privatization and individualization of personal feelings.

### **Cynical Reason and Kynical Resistance**

Peter Solterdijk (1987), an enormously influential German scholar in critical theory, theorizes this kind of privatized resistance in bodily forms. In today's modern society he poses a description of the body which responds to the cynicism of domination with satirical laughter, defiant body actions, or strategic silence. He calls this bodily response "kynical resistance." In creating this "situated body response" to a cynical consciousness of the modern human condition, he reinstates the impossibility of self-language without worldly language, or self-experience without its connection to worldly experiences. In the notion of cynicism as a bodily physical response to the "situation" of one's life (even though unconscious), lies the bodily dissonance between "how one lives," and "how one feels about the life condition."

Cynicism as repression is, for Solterdijk, the other side of kynicism. Indeed, he perceives cynicism as the predominant mindset of the post 1960 era:

...it articulates an uneasiness that sees the modern world steeped in cultural insanities, false hopes and their disappointment, in the progress of madness and the suspension of reason, in the deep schism that runs through modern consciousness and that seems to separate the rational and the real, what we know and what we do, from each other for all time. (1987, p. 217)

Solterdijk describes what he calls, "the perversely complicated structures of consciousness" that, as he notes;

...has become reflective and is almost more melancholy than false; it is a consciousness that, under the compulsions of self-preservation, continues to run itself, though run down, in a permanent moral self-denial. (p. 217)

Cynical thinking can only become possible when two different views of the world are seen in their contradictory relationship - namely an official view and an unofficial view. This concept of cynicism produces a corresponding though opposite form of expression, kynicism. Kynicism is, as explained by Solterdijk:

...the urge of individuals to maintain themselves as fully rational living beings against the distortions and semirationalities of their societies. Existence in resistance, in laughter, in refusal, in the appeal of the whole of nature and a full life. It begins as plebeian "individualism," pantomimic, wily, and quick-witted. (pp. 217-218)

Kynical impulses are widely displayed in the "clash of consciousnesses" as they are written on and acted out with our bodies. Following are several examples Solterdijk provides in his chapter "Concerning the Psychosomatics of the Zeitgeist.

When we quarrel passionately, we often come to the point where words are not enough. The body knows how to help: We stick out our tongues and make a noise that makes it clear what we think of the other person.

A crooked smile, an evilly clever gesture, easily arises out of crooked superiority. One corner of the mouth, often the left corner, is drawn upward. On the mouth of the master; the split of consciousness becomes visible; the other half knows there is really nothing to laugh about ... The wordly realism of the master cynic comes from the wise to save face while he is getting his hands dirty.

The life experience of victims are revealed in their bitterness. On their lips, a bitter silence forms.

The cynical gaze lets things know that they do not exist as real objects for it, but only as phenomena and information. It looks at them as if they already belong to the past.

In modern civilization of media and fashion, an atmospheric concoction of cosmetics, pornography, consumerism, illusion, addiction, and prostitution reigns for which the baring and depiction of breasts is typical. In the commodity world, it seems that nothing functions without them anymore...Sexism? If it were only that simple...These modern business breasts exist, philosophically speaking, only in themselves, as things, not for themselves, as conscious bodies.

The arse doomed to spend its life in the dark, as the beggar among body parts...The arse is the plebeian, the grass-roots democrat, and the cosmopolitan among the parts of the body - in a word, the elementary kynical organ. It provides the solid materialist basis. It is at home on all toilets all over the world. (pp. 141-147)

The attempt of Solterdijk is to integrate philosophy (and its concerns with the "great problems" of our world) to the concerns of the "trivial-everyday life." The world situation, he argues, can be found in our bones, our nerves, our eyes, and even in the corners of our mouths. Indeed, the possibility for what he calls kynical responses to the cynicism of the modern world is crucial. Here is where our humanity resides and pokes out at the world in response to the conditions we find

ourselves in. Solterdijk (1987, p. 140) identifies a subjectivity that "in spite of the horror of socialization" in a Western mindset of "hard facts, hard subjects, hard politics, and hard business" would reject distancing and objectification for "physiognomic thought which poses a sense of warmth and intimacy, convivial knowledge, and a libidinous closeness to the world that compensates for the objectifying drive toward the domination of things." The hope is for the synchronization of self and worldly experience - a consciousness that can enfold our privatized and individualized selves into the greater "whole" of human experience.

His approach shares common ground with critiques of Western rationality and patriarchy as they have been articulated in the discourses of ecology, psychoanalysis, feminism, and radical theology. These discourses offer a critique of the regime of disembodied thought and they articulate a language of flesh and blood realities. Their attempt is to announce a new critique of reason that asserts the inseparability of mind and body, thought and life.

Examples of kynical resistance can be found in studies of popular culture. Leslie Roman, in one such study, examined the cultural production of femininity in the ritual of creating the Punk slam dance. Her study gives examples of kynical resistance in the form of young women "slam dancing." The following is a description of one young woman's euphoric experience sustained when dancing.

When I get out there on the dance floor I close my eyes. I almost never have my eyes open when dancing...This is going to sound really sappy or something, but you saw 'Star Wars,'right? You know that 'Force' - that thing that went through the whole movie? Well, I feel like that when I'm dancing...I feel like I'm really going into

something. I get this sensation of being part of this huge, like, a whirlpool or something and letting myself go into it. **I'm not aware of my body. It's just another thing** for me personally...In a way I feel separated from my body in the fact that **It's there doing something that I don't normally do in an interaction with other people with my body.** It's nice. I'm not aware of pain a whole lot when I get my adrenalin going, which is scary. And that happens to me in basketball or soccer. You know, I'll sprain my ankle...which is dangerous not feeling it, **but I like feelings of just being so active it hurts.** It's like the kind of pain that's satisfying. I don't mean that to sound sadistic or masochistic - I always get those two mixed up. It's just that some things are really satisfying as much as it may hurt me or wear me down. I feel like I've accomplished something just getting women out there on the dance floor [emphases added]. (1988, p. 160)

This description of dancing as an extraordinary moment when the young woman experiences losing herself in a mass 'whirlpool' suggests a state of transcendence. In this state of euphoria there is relationship between the pleasure of such a mode, disembodiment (transcending the body), and the desire to celebrate actively the whole feminine body rather than "give status to certain parts of the body as sexual fetishes for male eroticism" (Roman, p. 160). Dancing, in this sense, challenges the idea of feminine bodily fragmentation and objectification. However, this kind of cynical resistance is both temporary and partial. For, as already argued, any resistance without "critical grounding" is limited in its effects on our everyday existence.

In the following section I will briefly reflect on images of bodies, black and white, male and female, active in resistance to forms of oppression.

### **Body as the Material Base for Liberation**

There are images we can call upon which provide examples of the body as the material base for forms of resistance and the struggle for political and social liberation. Image the black South African bodies, always moving, filling the space between what they know as slavery and what they aspire to as freedom. They pulsate with an energy which is filled with life, pounding out with every step the defiant anger which sounds the demand for some control over their own lives. Moving together rhythmically and instinctually, right arm raised, fist clenched - up and down, yet not touching, they present an image of solidarity. Their bodies speak the words of resistance - they dance on the ground of freedom. They sweat, stinking with the struggle for life. Behind the images their bodies make is the defiance of a political and economic system that names them as black, and therefore less than those who are white and control their world.

Less obvious forms resistance are found throughout the society. The work of the German theorist Frigga Haug and her colleagues provides an example of research which focuses on making conscious how women relate to their own bodies in the interest of human liberation. The formation of sexuality and individuation contains moments of both their submission and resistance to dominant notions of what it is to be a woman. Their research focused upon the everyday taken-for-grantedness of women's existence, and is based upon a critical reflection on stories about their own lives. These stories are retold from childhood memories which were centered around issues of the body. Among these were stories that revealed attempts by parents to instill in their daughters the "correct"



way to "keep your legs together while sitting," to "keep your knees together," to "cross your ankles," and to not "let your legs part." Many women struggle through hours of trying to keep their legs together, keeping their virtue enclosed whether sitting on gym bleachers or church pews. Yet look at many young women today. Positions of sitting cross-legged, ankle on top of knee, casual openness, defiant in the straight posture, hands folded in lap, legs crossed at ankles, and body angled to the diagonal. Our bodies speak of the changed position of women who are striking out at convention and tradition. To move beyond an unconscious challenge and emotional defense there has to be a critical connection which can thread together the fragments of the contradictions, accommodations, and resistances.

In the following chapter, **Body Memories: Reflections On A Life-World**, I will propose an alternative way of thinking, one that is in terms of the culturally-made orderings of the body and the senses. The focus will shift to personal "body memories" as a way of understanding the social construction of our bodies, and the implications of such knowledge for education. Such a process represents an extension of critical pedagogy in a number of ways. It allows us to see how the body is a primary site for forms of oppression and dehumanization, as well as the focus of desire and resistance. This kind of personal reflection takes seriously the notion of "voice" in critical pedagogy, that is, the validation of one's own knowledge and experience. In allowing me to become critically aware of my own life in this way, the possibilities of conscious choices about the nature of my life are realized.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **BODY MEMORIES: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON A LIFE - WORLD**

The purpose of this chapter is to exemplify a critical pedagogy which includes the body as a site for critical reflection and understanding of one's life-world. (I refer here to "a critical pedagogy," rather "Critical Pedagogy" to defer any references to a "True" pedagogy, or to one which might already exist.) The chapter also becomes the place I seek to unify the abstractness of my previous analysis with the concreteness of my own life-world.

Critical pedagogy gives importance place to the concept of "voice." My own voice emerges here through reflections upon my "body memories." Also in the tradition of critical pedagogy, I relate my personal narrative to cultural analysis - that is making sense of "my embodied memories" through critical reflection upon the social relations from which they are formed.

The body (or my body) has been conceived of in this work as the interface of the individual and society; as the "terrain of flesh" where ideological structures are inscribed; as the material base which holds knowledge; as that which can "tell the stories" of the lives we live. Following my argument in the previous chapters that the body must be included in a critical pedagogy concerned with the human liberation, I have attempted to illustrate how, through this personal/cultural dialectic, the body marks a crucial reality upon which we can begin to make sense of the connections between the individual and the culture, the mind and the body,

the rational and the sensual. My body memories bring to the surface in a concrete form the issues which have been referred to earlier in a more abstract mode of presentation. The selected memories presented below are constructed out of discourses and culture in which I live, such as my life as a student, as a woman, as an artist-dancer, as an educator-artist. While they may appear to be lengthy I believe that they provide a depth and richness which allows the reader to become aware of the struggles and dialogue between my "felt" experiences and "reasoned" understandings. They are not only to be illustrative of a process, but also to be illustrative of the deeper connections between how one thinks and how one lives. The attempt here is to focus on particular situations in my life so as to rediscover the sensual texture of these moments and situations. It means attempting to return to the past as a stranger to recall and reassess personal history.

I start from the assumption that critical pedagogy is a philosophy of praxis concerned with emancipation and committed to a process which connects self-reflection and understanding to a knowledge which makes transformation of the social conditions we live possible (Shapiro, 1990). It begins by making it possible for the silenced voices of students to speak in the classroom about their own experiences, concerns, desires, and therefore it remakes the curriculum into a dialectic between their particular hermeneutic of the lived world and the explanatory narrative of a critical theoretical framework. Without either the personal narrative or the critical framework the pedagogy is incomplete. Without the personal narrative, one cannot articulate or begin to problematize one's everyday existence needed for conscious decision making. And without a critical framework the

personal narrative is privatized, hindering relational understanding of the social forces which structure existence.

This then is an educative process in which education is conceived of as an existential and socially explanatory process. In this it resembles the process which has been described as "currere." Currere, defined by William Pinar (1978), is an educative process in which both teacher and student engage in a turning inward for finding voice. Yet the process goes beyond "psychoanalysis" in that, for understanding of what one feels, the turn is made back outwards towards the social and cultural attitudes, values and actions which co-constitute the making of our being. The purpose is gaining awareness of the basic structures of human existence through self/social understanding, and therefore makes possible conscious choice. A pedagogy based on self and social understanding for human liberation is not limited to a method, process, or pedagogic practice. This kind of pedagogy is a model of curriculum which includes making the subject matter the lives of the students and the process one which clearly emphasizes the importance of students "voicing" their own stories. (Of course the process here in this dissertation has been undertaken alone, whereas critical pedagogy is more likely to be pursued among a community of students. In the latter there is of course the possibility of the sharing of human experiences and sense of commonality and solidarity which emerges from this.) It becomes a discovering of the living, breathing life that struggles, suffers, thinks, feels, works, plays, and loves. In this kind of curriculum model the emphasis upon self and social understanding also means that questions of morality - of a "stance on being" (Welch) - cannot be

overlooked.

The chapter is divided into five themes:

**I. The Body In The Hidden Curriculum**

**II. Dancing: Resistance to Fragmentation**

**III. Woman As Body**

**IV. Life Against Death**

**V. Intimacy**

Each section begins with personal narrative and is followed by an analysis illuminating the ideological and cultural conditions through which these experiences, thoughts and feelings are given meaning. As a methodology for research it emphasizes the phenomenological, the interpretive, and the subjective. It clearly makes no claims of being systematic in its execution. The attempt is to be illustrative rather than comprehensive in its scope, and hence memory work is only fragmentary. Although these stories are personal and idiosyncratic their importance in this dissertation lies in their capacity to reveal how a life is positioned and given meaning within a social context. It is a personal remembering in which the attention is turned to the contents of consciousness for the purpose of gaining insight into the fundamental structures of human existence.

The critical - reflective process methodology used here does not come without difficulties and limitations. Limitations to my reflections upon my own body memories arose during my work. They include such issues as: 1) the requirement of treating the body as something external, when the object of research becomes the researcher herself; 2) the lack of experience in looking at the structures of

feelings in the context of social relations and cultural situations; 3) the lack of an adequate discourse which connects aesthetics to concrete situations; 4) the recalling of everyday memories from their "taken-for-granted" state, i.e. what Maxine Greene calls "making the familiar strange"; 5) seeing the "structured silences," i.e. what is consistently not said; recalling experiences which have been repressed or suppressed; or the speaking of the un-named, the silenced, the absent and the omitted; 6) analytic reasoning of a hegemonic consciousness of which one is a part; 7) reconstruction of past events and the telling of a personal narrative in terms as something which can claim to be an authentic experience; and 8) facing up to personal collaborations and cooperation with oppressive elements of society, and to prejudices and human weaknesses that must be uncovered in the search. These boundaries are not particular to body memories, but remain significant in any process of critical remembering.

And now what follows are stories representing the memory-work. I begin with schooling.

### **The Body In The Hidden Curriculum**

#### **Reflection One: First Memories of Schooling**

So organized was the room I entered, everything had a place. Somehow it made me experience my own body as only an added clutter to the room. I wasn't sure if I had dressed carefully enough. Maybe some hair was sticking out as it had a tendency to do when I had gone to bed the night before with it wet from bathing. So organized was the room, I couldn't decide where it was that I was suppose to be. Directed by the only figure who gave out firm and concise orders, the two of us (my mother and I) settled into two small chairs at the back table.

I partially sat down, meaning that even though I relented to the placement I continually rotated in the chair turning my body right and left trying to attend to the commotion of the other small figures entering into the room. I watched the procession. Each took a place. There seemed to be a one-way traffic pattern - entering. This process seemingly went on forever. As I became disinterested in the foregoing process, I began to "take in" my surroundings. The neatness and orderliness of it was strange to me. The room smelled old; somehow I knew that we weren't the first to experience this space. There persisted a feeling of oldness with the orderliness. I remembered my older brother's and sister's stories of school and how they had described the daily episodes between the teacher and the students around issues of discipline and control. How many children had wiggled, twisted, and turned in this seat before me? How many had been told to "stay in your seats until I tell you that you can get up."? I felt the smoothness left in the bottom of the chair from motion confined to it.

Distinctions between the scaled down furnishings, made to accomodate small bodies of six year olds, and the largeness of the room left me with a strange feeling of unease. The neatness of everything so close to the floor (chairs, tables, water fountain, sink, cabinets, closets, coat hooks, shelves, counters, and even door knobs) felt to me to be compressed by the surrounding walls and ceiling. Neatness came with enclosure and incorporated the same feelings of placement. Everything had a place and was held together by the disciplines of regulations regarding movement. ("Don't move that from its place." "Remember to return it where it came from." "That doesn't belong there.") The contradictions between the largeness of the room and specified places for anything in it, became a knowledge I carried in my body.

The longer I sat the more I began to feel the tension being produced by my desire to move around and explore. The more I became aware and concerned with the large looming figure who had strange powers over me, I began to feel myself become associated with all the small things in the room. I learned not to be "out of place," never to touch anyone or anything unless directed to do so. It was like a waiting room but you didn't know what you were waiting for. I began to feel held in place by the walls, ceiling, floor, and the single door. Confined to the chair my project became to escape it.

I was enclosed. Yet, it did not feel like an enclosure of safety and security, rather more like a cage with a cage-keeper who directed all movement. Once you entered that room you became the sole property of the large one. (In first grade everyone is smaller than the teacher.) Neatness and orderliness no longer held the effect of "things that are being taken care of" (as I had learned earlier at home that I had to take care of my toys by putting them away - a sort of "looking after them"), rather they

became a structuring of the classroom environment. The room was a storeroom holding a promise of fun and play. Lining the walls, filling the shelves, and hidden behind the cabinet doors were books, puzzles, blocks, crayons, paper, scissors, paints, dolls, telephones, all things which were to remain in place until that magical time that we were allowed to (cautiously and carefully) play.

Without warning my mother left. At that moment I felt the sharpness of my aloneness. The only one who knew anything about me, who called me smart and beautiful, left. The room took on a new meaning. It became a world. In that world, I took on a different identity. I became a student. There sandwiched between two others at a table of eight, I began to be something and someone else. And, I wasn't sure of either. At that table I felt both ownership and a solidarity with my group. Yet, I also had to compete with them to be the quietest, neatest, best-behaved student in order to gain the prizes of going for snack, dusting the erasers, leading the lunchroom line, or being praised by the teacher. Above all else I learned I had to take care of myself first.

I suffered the confinement of that middle seat, in the second table along the side wall. My body manifested the brusies. The seating assignment filtered through every activity - the reading circle, the lunch room seating, lining up for recess, drinking water, going to the bathroom, bus lines, and library trips. Throughout the school day I was presented with the task of having my body in a particular space in a particular way. I learned in multiple ways to maintain my body - face front, sit quietly, stay in line, raise my hand, not to look out the windows or door, not to talk, sing or make noises, not to run on the playground, and above all else, remain in my seat. Compressed, repressed, and controlled, the shared space between me and that room became a symbol of a situation that held unredeemed promises of pleasure, fun, and the excitement of exploration. **Held is the crucial word.** For they were held and allocated as a means to ensure conformity. If we could walk in a straight line to the lunch room we could have an afternoon story; if we put our things away quietly we could have an extra five minutes of recess; if we finished our work without talking, we could paint, draw or color. Every act became a bargain.

My urge to explore, discover, play and imagine, so well developed outside of school, became my enemies in school. "She" will let me know when, where, how and with what I will be allowed to encounter this place, this enclosed room, where my public educational experiences began with the confining of my body - my spirit. Somewhere inside of me I felt the split begin.



The purpose of this retrospection is to bring to consciousness the process of social formation through a narrative that allows the "embodied ideology" to speak. The attempt to uncover the multi-layered meanings can best be understood in light of educators such as Michel Apple, Jean Anyon, Nancy King, William Pinar, David Purpel and others who have examined the notion of a "hidden curriculum" in the schooling process. Realized within this theory is a conceptualization of schools as a mirror to society in that they reflect the social, economic and political values of the dominant ideology. These values are revealed in the day to day interactions, structures, and environment in which schooling takes place. Educational institutions have as their goal the production of a labor force which can service and provide labor for the capitalist economic system. Valerie Suransky, in her research concerning the schooling of preschool children, emphasizes the relationship between the industrialization of America and its public schools as one which produces students who "conform to the needs and expectations of the corporate and technocratic world." She writes:

The social landscape of the classroom, with an emphasis on discipline, punctuality, acceptance of authority, and accountability for one's world, replicated the social relations of the work place, facilitating an early acculturation to the social division of labor, thereby reproducing the class structures which mass education supposedly diminishes. (1983, p. 136)

Developing alongside of this educational project of supplying a work force based on class divisions was the "idea" of childhood tied to the technological ideology creating a "culture of positivism" (Suransky). The effect on schooling was the constant preoccupation with management, behavioral and instructional

objectives, tracking, standardized testing, cost-benefit analyses, and effective criteria. It became a model which objectified, separated, and alienated the child from self-hood through a process which "strips the self", as Suransky argues, in its obsession with conformity and nonauthentic modes of being. Studies of the "hidden curriculum" such as those by Valerie Suransky, Peter McLaren, Phillip Corrigan, and Jane Roland Martin, point to the denial of body needs, the separation of work and play, separation of school and life, and the separation of school knowledge and personal knowledge. It makes clear how schooling represses creativity and imagination, leads to the alienation from feeling, and the dehumanizing restrictions on physical movement. This takes place within the controlling phenomenon of time, the ever present force of competition and success, and the incessant demand for obedience to authority. These are what Suransky terms non-authentic modes of being.

Play is the child's praxis upon the world. Through play children restructure, invent, create, and transform the given reality. Through play the child's body becomes mediator for her or his creative and agentic powers. The body of the child is **the** central receiver of a curriculum which sends messages to deny creative and imaginative powers. For to play, imagine, create, fantasize, explore, discover or show curiosity threatens the structured landscape which is physically and psychically geared to minimize change. Repression, suppression, and sometimes resistance become the necessary mode of being for the child.

A specific social reality emerges expressing a distinct set of social relations and assumptions about the world and how one lives in that world. The child learns

these in that which is visibly controlled - the body. Therefore, the effects of such a process come to be associated, in the early years, in the way curriculum is geared to "body management." Jane Roland Martin has shown how this process is connected to an education which separates mind and body, and therefore diminishes our sense of the latter. She (1985, p. 73) says that "...there is no place for education of the body, and since most action involves bodily movement, this means there is little room in it for education of action." Martin defines our liberal notion of education as that which develops, not the mind as a whole, but only the rational mind. The effect is a "disembodied" mind when reason keeps feeling and emotion under tight control. The result is "mindless bodies," bodies unfeelingly doing a job (Martin). In this model, feeling and emotion have no place. To accommodate such a model, students must alienate themselves from their own bodies - that which mediates their experiences and provides them with knowledge of the relationship between self and world.

Michael Apple and Nancy King (1983, pp. 82-99) in their article on "What Do Schools Teach?", argue that the study of the relationship between the ideology and school knowledge is of great importance to understanding the larger social collectivity. In these illuminations and concerns in educational theory, the child's body becomes the crucial reminder of the immense gap left in an educational theory, which itself forgets that all knowledge is body-mediated knowledge. Such a statement is entirely congruent with that strongly argued tradition in education from Dewey to Piaget about the primacy of experience in the process of learning. In order to critically reflect upon issues of the purpose and goals of education, we

must include the somatic nature of learning and its early effects on the minds and bodies of young children.

### **Dancing: Resistance to Fragmentation**

#### **Reflection Two: Tap Dancing at the Age of Ten**

The room was an elementary school gym - old, musty, and dark. Being built in a time before steel and tile, everything was wooden - walls, ceiling, rafters, floors, ceiling, and bleachers. Only the most central part of the gym captured the light from the high windows. Around the edges was a dark and mysterious space where the bleachers were. No one was there. No one was watching. On this day, I could cross-over the side floor markings that were the visible boundaries between the "doers" and the "watchers." Today there were no balls, referees, nets, ropes, score boards, whistles, or players. There was just us, all girls, all there for our first dance class.

Bunched up in the center of the space facing the instructor we waited for our instructions. We weren't grouped by age, height, or any other given structure. What brought us there was desire. I couldn't see her, the woman in front who began calling out directions.

Hands on your hips. Brush your right foot  
front, now back. Brush, brush, brush brush.

Because I couldn't watch her demonstrations I watched those around me. I had to make a caculated survey of those surrounding me until I saw several doing the same movement. I could then determine that indeed this was the correct movement and then imitate it.

Brush, brush, brush, brush. Make two sounds,  
Brush, brush. Good. Now change feet. Brush  
brush. Shuf-file, shuf-file. Good.

Balancing on one foot while moving the other was hard at first. I had to learn how to control my body, make it do what I wanted. It was the sound and the rythmn of bodies in unison that identified the "correctness" of the movement. Seeing and moving, perception and sound, time and space, commanded my total presence.

Now try brush, brush, step. Brush, brush, step. One, two, three.  
Shuf-file step. Shuf-file step.

There wasn't a before or after, there was only the time of the motion. Feelings of unison, togetherness, and control did not oppose each other. The goal was "to be together."

Shuffle step. shuffle step. Change feet.

Together. Shuffle step. Shuffle step.

Between our bodies moving together and the rhythm as sounded by our feet, I became grounded. There was a sense of freedom in moving, yet it was held by both time and space. In that space I was connected to my own body and to that of those who surrounded me. Every act of delineated movement was both a releasing and a strengthening.

Shuffle step. Shuffle step. Shuffle step.

There was something there I felt was undeniably real. Everything was as it appeared and felt. There was a coherence between my body and me, between surface motion and internal feeling, between thinking and being. Those body feelings remained as ecstatic traces; as memories of body freedom, control and collective relationship. I began to crave those experiences of wordlessness - a time that belonged to me and my body.

All together. Two shuffle steps on your right. Then two shuffle steps on your left. Repeat three times. That's very good. See you next week. Practice.

The feelings of freedom, control, and power, as described in the above narrative, are also in Leslie Gotfrit's description when she writes about her experiences of "going dancing" in a social setting. Gotfrit writes (1988, pp. 122-123) about her experiences of dancing as an investigation of "the multiplicity of pleasures that women may find in "going dancing," arguing that the way sexuality is allowed expression through dance contributes to the power of its pleasures.

Dancing precipitates an incredible longing. To recover pleasure - in the imagining and remembering, the connecting again with my limbs, my breath, my body - is to ignite desire. These are rare moments of realizing my body and mind as not distinct, and of feeling the power of creativity embodied.

The dance floor is one location where the body becomes central in resisting the restraints of a culture which rigidly regulates desire and pleasure. The body dancing becomes the location where desire and pleasure intersect. This release of sexuality from its usual constraints has particular implications for women. Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie (1978 p. 18) note in their article concerning "Rock and Sexuality":

Dance is one leisure activity in which girls and young women play a dominant role. Dancing for them is creative and physically satisfying.

To understand the feelings of liberation, whether in popular dance forms or ones considered artistic, the evidential characteristics of sensual pleasure and sensual authority must be acknowledged. In dancing women are permitted to be sexual; to feel their own erotic nature with, and created from, their own body experiences. These feelings are in relationship to having control over their bodies. They produce feelings of empowerment through taking risk, moving boldly, taking up space, and in an awareness of their bodies being perceived of as objects.

Through dancing, the subject is able to reposition her body in regard to the male gaze. In so doing, she is able to challenge the moral authority that has hitherto controlled her. Her position allows her to renegotiate the terms of the masculine ideology which shapes her. The new experience is an accommodation between the sheer imposition of ideology and the individual's mediation of it. The experience contains both active and passive moments; while, in the active role one contests social rules, one also never fully escapes the dominant male gaze and its influence.

### **Reflection Three: Dancing to Reclaim My Space**

Reaching up in the perfect arch  
My body knows the hope, the liberation

Carefully closing into a contraction  
of life,  
    closing in  
losing all breath.

I move outward taking in space,  
taking in time,  
turning to a new direction,  
    lowering  
gathering within  
movement  
movement.

I know it all - I am  
    time-space-motion  
        I am  
    life.  
I begin and end,  
somewhere in between  
    I live.

Dancing, as suggested in the work of Gotfrit, Frith and McRobbie, is more than an activity of resistance. It provides the possibility for the re-integration of mind and body which is deemed necessary for opposing domination. With such resistance to regulation and suppression, human agency is remembered. Yet, without critical reflection and interpretation of this act of bodily resistance and enactment of desire, it becomes unlikely to be appropriated as an act that contributes to social transformation. For, recovering sexuality and the body through dancing, and therefore accessing the powers of desire, is always in contestation to the male gaze and the patriarchal culture which it represents. The

constitution of desire and the formation of pleasure are products of the social and power relations that structure existence. It is in the intersection of individuals with these material relations which creates the struggles and challenges around these social inscriptions. The formation is never a static one but an ongoing dialectic between restriction and repression, and pleasure and agency. Paradoxically, as Cixous, Duras, Irigaray and other feminists writers note, women's bodies are always placed in this dialectic between freedom and its circumscription. The agency of dancing, the re-taking of one's own body cannot be separated from the ever-present male-gaze as "she" bathes, dresses, and sprays herself with perfume with a "male eye" that she has internalized - she makes herself "ready to go."

#### **Reflection Four: Creating Dance**

The excitement and thrill are always there. It has never changed over the years of watching dancers perform the dance that we have created together. Together - collectively, words generally not used by artists to describe the creation of art or the art itself. Without me there is no dance, without the dancers there is no dance. The creation of it comes from everyone who is involved. I watch them move; I feel their movement in my body; I remember the process of making the dance - things that were said, feelings, listening for hours to find the appropriate music, searching for costumes which convey the existential qualities of the dance, and naming and re-naming of the sections of movement which can assist the audience in following the content of the dance.

I remember the closeness of bodies in the dance studio - the closeness to each other in allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and to take risks together. The studio becomes a sacred place when dancers and choreographers come together. One must feel protected and secure to create and to work with those who are creating. Everyone sensitizes themselves to the space and to each other. There are jokes, soft touching, an overall display of care and concern needed to free the fragile subject into the process of creating. We work through the process together.



"Now I want you to take a few minutes and concentrate on getting dressed. What do you do each morning? Choose something particular to your dressing regime."

They share their morning rituals. We laugh at our own inhibitions in telling about our everyday habit, such as spitting when we brush our teeth. Sometimes it is a nervous laughter. They tell stories about getting dressed and secret feelings about being afraid that the way they "put their jeans on" is wrong.

I ask them to now put their descriptions into movement.

"Will you show me what you have done." I watch each dancer move through her dressing ritual. I offer suggestions.

"Try making the drawer pulling movement larger. Now try it slower. Okay use three different levels. Great. Change your focus. Watch your hands. Now put a hold in between the first and second movement."

With each dancer I watch and offer suggestions. Sometimes I like the way the manipulations look at first. Many times they are several adjustments. Sometimes the dancers say they don't like it, or suggest the movement variations or dynamics themselves. And, sometimes, I see something and I say "Whatever that was that you were doing, keep it."

It's a long process. We move from one section to another. They ask me, "Is this the first section?"

I can only respond that I think it will be the second or third. I'm not sure yet what the first will be. We add movements together.

"Amy, let's do your movement first. Will you teach it to the other dancers?"

And we move down the list of dancers. I choose what the sequence will be, but it is their movements. They create them through personal reflection, and then teach them as movements to other dancers. I ask their opinion of my choreographic patterning. We talk about what kind of clothes we wear and why. We talk about what they wear to college classes, what they wear on dates, what they wear to religious services, what they wear to play in; everything they put on their bodies and how it makes them feel are part of the discussion. Whatever comes through their memories is reflected and interpreted. We watch movies about rape, and women in politics. We talk, laugh, and cry. We share personal stories. With every rehearsal there is a new intensity.

"This dance is about my life. I feel it. I dance it. I know it." The dancers respond to the process that tells me the process has gone beyond learning steps, or making a product.

I watch them dance it on the stage. Afterwards they tell me the process and the dance somehow felt different than other dances they had done.

"It felt like me up there dancing, not me dancing somebody else. I felt vulnerable, but authentic. There was a feeling of power and strength. We had to depend on each other in the dance because we didn't have counts. We could know what to do only by being aware of each other. Because we had our own movements but also had to depend on each other, I felt like an individual, but I also felt solidarity with the group."

I watch the last performance. The lights dim and I feel the death of the dance linger in my soul. It will never be again with the ones who created it. The hope is that it remains in their consciousness as their bodies forget the dance.

My memory described here raises for me, as a dancer and artist, the question of creativity and its relationship to questions of existential freedom and meaning. Many artists, do live in the hope of freedom experienced through creativity. Yet freedom can only be found in the relationship that one has with the world. It is not a state of mind, rather it is a state of being. Art remains on the fringe of society in its contradictions to alienating and uncreative work, yet it has become part of a system in which art becomes a reflection of the hierarchical relations of production in which only a few can be choreographers (and, men are more recognized than women), and the dancers' bodies are used as instruments of the choreography.

The concept of creativity, as an expression of the human ability to re-make and re-form their lives and the world in which they live, expresses Freire's definition of authentic liberation. Freire values creativity as a process of humanization, and therefore, as a praxis where one engages in reflection and action upon the world

in order to transform it. **Without creativity is to be without freedom;** not as a state of mind but as an act of living. The principles of creative movement must not be understood mechanically (though it can often be confused with technical training in the arts for the purpose of an "artistic" product in the narrowest sense of an aesthetic object), but as a creative process in a broader sense. Here the creative process may be nurtured within a dance experience, but "the dance" does not take precedence. Rather than emphasizing the dance as a product, the focus is upon the ability of the child to come to better understand her or himself and the world in which she or he lives. The creative process is released from the four walls of the classroom or dance studio into the larger dimension of life. The boundaries between art and life crumble, and with the disintegration of the boundary the child is to engage in, as Freire defines, a process of humanization in the creative act of transforming one's world.

As we mature as human beings, we better understand the essence of the creative process as one which assists us in "meaning-making" of our lives and our world. Further we are better able to unite our creative powers to our images for a better world and the possibilities of re-creating that which exists. It is this human passion for a meaningful life that the reconnection of subject to object expresses the hope for a unity of being. This reconnecting relationship is one between what appears and what is essential, or the relationship between essence and existence. Fromm suggests the knowledge of one's creative powers and one's possibility of making one's world is where truth of self is found. He (1966, p. 27) writes, "In order to know the world, man has to make the world his own."

Heidegger reminds us that alienation from one's relationship to one's world closes off from wo/man the possibility for authenticity and possibility (1964) into a self absorbed with its own existence. The movement, rather than a creative and vital drive reconnecting humans with hope and possibility for a unity of being, is as Heidegger describes, a downward and turbulent plunge into groundlessness and inauthenticity.

### **Reflection Five: Being - Grounded**

Stand parallel. Roll down for eight, hang eight counts, demi-plie four counts, straighten, slowly roll up eight, releve four, lift both arms, rising from the side, plie and straighten. Breathe. Again. Head drops first, feel each vertebra as you slowly roll down. Sink into your plie, release your head, enjoy the release, keep your rotators engaged. Make it flow. Be continuous, no stops, energy out the top of your head and down into the floor, expand, open up your back. Now in second position.

The first moments in dance class are for a recentering of mind and body; a pulling together of yourself leaving outside everything that is "outside" - your life. The intention is to bring to the present a body in space and in motion which creates dance in time. Thought can not wander; breathe deeply and fully; awaken yourself to your total presence. As class continues, tightened muscles give way to new directions altering patterns of movement. The overall feeling is of control, strength, and power.

I have prepared myself beforehand for dance. The leotard must be light weight - preferably nylon or cotton, footless Danskin tights, and loose clothing to fit over as outer wear. There is always some extra covering for the body in case I feel that there is some part of my body which needs extra coaxing for "warming up" (a term which signifies to the dancer that the body has been sufficiently prepared to dance). Dancers spend the larger part of class in a warm up and in activities that strengthen muscles. Strategically dancers attack "tight" muscles before class begins, rolling, swinging, pointing, flexing, dropping, turning, twisting, opening. Doing whatever has been devised as a personal routine and ritualistically undertaken to prepare their body for class.

I prepare by lying on my back. I feel the presence of my body there on the floor. My total attention is to what I feel in my body in that space at that time. Each movement has been developed to help me feel my body - arms, legs, feet, hands, shoulders, lower and upper back, stomach, neck, head, and the connecting joints between them. I move to feel the muscles' resistance to the movement and their eventual giving into the movement. It is a double use of gravity. The floor beneath me becomes my grounding. I learn to work with it, the giving and resisting. Between them is where movement is found. In this state of being - a reality which incorporates restraint and freedom - there remains a constant grounding. The more strongly I feel my connectedness to the floor, the more stability I have, and the more security I have for moving.

Grounding requires choice and responsibility. I must make a decision, a commitment to my grounding with a strength which will hold me in place. It is the strength of the commitment which will allow me the freedom to move with conviction. There can be no holding back on either this commitment or the movement to dance fully. To dance fully is to not withhold. There can be no withholding. To dance fully is to feel myself "alive" full of life. This is why I dance.

My own grounding is felt in my "gut." It is from here that I feel centered. I experience dance from my center out. I can rise, lift, arch, turn, spiral, leap, reach, contract and open from my body. With time through movement, energy is produced, or captured, and made to dance. It is for me eros or life energy. Thinking and being become one when I dance. No longer are there the distinctions of mind and body. There is instead only being. When I am dancing nothing else exist for me. Space, time and energy - that which makes up dance - is made concrete by my body. I feel the significance of my own existence which is deemed necessary for the dance to exist.

The experience of dance, described by a locating of self in time and space, can appear to invert the fragmentation and alienation so painfully present in the postmodern world. The dance experience can become a search for identity in a situation **which appears** to offer a reconnection of mind and body through self-referencing in time and space. The dance class for many dancers represents "home" - one which becomes a site of a partial resistance to pre-set identifications and pre-set placements in the existing social world. There is here a rejection of a

life which separates mind and body, thought and feeling, creativity and life. It is a search for intimate connections between self and being - that is, between self-consciousness and the act of living. The subject is offered an assumable identity in the dance class as one of a dancer.

Unfulfilled potentiality is an essential part of being a dancer; many times felt as a drive to perfection. One is constantly challenged, to struggle and achieve control over one's own body in movement. For many it becomes a total commitment to "be perfect." There are classes every day, and rehearsals and performances at night. The dancers separate themselves from the social world in their need to "be in being." Eric Fromm describes this act of grasping the world through separation.

Neither possession, nor power, nor sensuous satisfaction ... can fulfill man's desire for meaning in his life; he remains in all this separate from the whole, hence unhappy. Only in being productively active can man make sense of his life, and while he thus enjoys life, he is not greedily holding on to it. He has given up the greed for having, and is fulfilled by being; he is filled because he is empty; he is much, because he is little. (1966, p. 29)

The dancer's life is realized only during the time when one is dancing. John Berger (1984) notes that this is a denial of time, and as such denies everything around them. Experiences which defy time create an illusion of existence without past and future, and without social connections. Time altered the body-form is victimized as it slips away into the ephemeral existence. The dancer constantly faces the possibility of effacement. Her existence is erased at the end of each dance. At each performance she is born, lives, and dies. Fredric Jameson speaks

of "the hysterical sublime."

...it is the self that touches the limit; here it is the body that is touching the limits, 'volatilized,' in this experience of images, to the point of being outside of itself, or losing itself. (cited in Stehpanson, 1988, p. 30)

Existence here is reduced to an instant of time in a most intense final punctual experience, but no longer subjective. It is, as Berger understands, a kind of non-humanist experience of limits beyond which the subject gets dissolved.

The body for the dancer mediates the expectations and possibilities of becoming subjects of her/his world. Yet these are only illusions of reality, unrealized promises of liberation. For example, the dancer finds identity in the dance studio. This grounding little affects the life-world outside the studio. The body objectified - something to be perfected through the narrowly defined and masculine nature of art. In such an order, art offers only the pretense of transcendence - especially the transcendence of temporal existence.

### **Woman As Body**

#### **Reflection Six: Never Without Body**

There is never a moment that I am without body, with the exception of sleep. And I'm not sure of even that. It's a nagging presence of what has been, what could be, and what will never be. My body - hair, skin, shape, size, smell - is a constant reminder of who I am as connected to what I appear to be in cultural terms.

There is a war that only women know - the fight to "be all that you can be" (a slogan designed for the US Army, which better describes the advertising battle designed to "bring numbers of women to cosmetic counters, clothing

stores, work-out centers" in order for them to "shape up" and "put their best face forward.")

Under stressful life conditions my face "breaks out"; when the time between taking a dance class is "too long" my thigh muscles relax; when I change my dancing schedules my metabolism slows down and inevitably within a week I have gained five more pounds. Every year my body tells me I'm aging - grey hair, dropped breasts, everything seems to be releasing to the pull of gravity leaving drooping and dangling flesh. I know at all times what my physical appearance is.

Every day there is an examination to "see where I am - that is what appearance I have." From my memory of that perceived state of appearance comes my state of being. My psychological constitution is closely tied to the way I feel about my appearance. Questions concerning dress command the beginning of each day. The questions are very complex and demand a sophisticated response.

In the modern world many women play a double standard, creatively "pleasing themselves" and dressing for comfort, while at the same time wanting to appear casually sexy, yet wholesome. My mind and body react - are the clothes I am wearing both attractive and comfortable. Attractive here meaning the materials being made out of natural fibers, and are stylish but not trendy. They must pass several other "dressing" tests. Are they sensual to both feel and see, yet not blatantly sexy? Do they look to be creatively put together in a sophisticated manner, yet retain a look of a natural talent for creating images? Are the colors good for my skin tone bringing out the best looks for me? Are the accessories as earrings, shoes, scarves, bracelets, necklaces, and pens appropriately selected in relationship to gain the "total look"?

Hair is also treated as an accessory. There remains a constant struggle - should I cut, perm, or color, what is the right length, shape and texture, how can I achieve the right amount of "mussiness" and have it still appear as if it is natural? Make-up presents the task of wearing it to appear as if you are not wearing it, but naturally look so attractive.

The "proper" clothes must be chosen for a specific occasions: linen and silk blazers for cultural events; jeans for an appearance which states "I still have a great body, like to have fun, and am somewhat rebellious"; t-shirts for youth; sweats for "I'm serious about the shape of my body and I work at it"; wool for professional work; short dresses, baggy pants, or high heels for playtime such as going out to eat, dance, or to the theatre; and cotton and flat shoes for travel. These allude to only some of the typical standards for women's dressing (and they only speak to outer-wear). There is at least as much, if not more, concern with "under-wear," ranging from silk "Teddies"



to french-cut cotton undies. Colors, cuts, fabrics provide an endless array of combinations which change with seasons and style over longer periods of time. Yesterday polyester was in vogue, today it is rayon.

The amount of time and energy women expend on the appearance of the body is enormous. In such a culture where appearance is so tied to self-worth, women are constantly in a vicious circle. Vicious is the social reality in which the lives of women are consumed by the demands of appearance on their life energies. There is no way out. The body's appearance takes on the signification of woman. It creates an aesthetic based upon a desired image as pleasure is equated to being "happy" with how one appears. Yet, John Berger (1984) argues, it is happiness to be achieved through an image which can never be reached. Berger reveals the contradictions women are faced with when happiness is achieved through functional gratification:

Human happiness is rare. There are no happy periods, only happy moments. But happiness is precisely a generalized pleasure. And the state of happiness can be defined by an equation whereby, at that moment, the gift of one's well being equals the gift of existence. Without a surplus of pleasure over and above functional gratification, such well-being could not exist. Aesthetic experience is the purest expression of this equation. (1984, p. 70)

Not only are women trapped by an aesthetic of appearance, they must also contend with an ideology which suggests freedom in terms of having a choice of "choosing appearance." Understandably, the choosing of an image which directs how your being is perceived, is not to be confused with the real freedom of choosing how you want to live. The former means to choose from a large selection of clothing in which identities (particularly female identity) can be re-made

and re-presented, and be "made-over." The illusion of freedom must not be confused with the liberation from the actual constraints and limitations of our real conditions of existence. The positioning of women's bodies in society as objects of display and of mobile identity gives us the apparent freedom of a world in which the self can be continuously repositioned, and resituated. This freedom to choose self-identity is always circumscribed by the male gaze. It is a false perception of freedom. Women's bodies are channeled into the masculine domain of abstract sexuality and alienated sensuality.

#### **Reflection Seven: On My Skin**

Woman's body is never her own. I experience the time and space of man each time a man uninvitedly whistles, cat-calls, yelps, or shouts "hey-baby." The words cover me like a whore. With them I become dirty. These men have taken my body from me and appropriated it as their own. Out in the open I am left unprotected. Their gaze reduces me to a body, any body. The moment surrounds me and takes control of my whole being. It lingers on my skin afterwards like putrid slime.

#### **Reflection Eight: Work That Body**

Aerobics, weight training, dieting, massage, swimming, biking, dance, all of these are significant in that they promise a way that I might "take control" of my own body. The conflict is never resolved - a constant tension that lives inside my flesh as a reminder of the "no-nos" and "should dos" that surround the perfected images of the well toned, strong, yet feminine - looking dancer's body. With every body intention, every act imagined or taken, the cultural inscriptions remained embodied.

Living in the body provides memories of pleasure and pain. They are inseparable. Yet, the pleasures felt from re-creating the body into a desired image are not purely functional. And the pain associated with one's subjugation to body appearances cannot totally capture or enclose one's life experiences. Somehow

the creative act turned towards re-making, or re-creating the body escapes and goes beyond the function to form an image. This mental and physical experience in which one's contemplation of, and re-creation of the body/subjectivity exceeds its functional purpose evokes feelings of well being - a generalized experience of pleasure. What can be remembered and recaptured is just that possibility to re-create who we are and how we live in the world when the creative process is returned to reconnect and re-relate the individual to the social. It is a situation which, as Marcuse (1969, p. 79) writes: "...gives all efforts to evaluate and even discuss the prospects for radical change in the domain of corporate capitalism their abstract, academic, unreal character." The forces for change, he says, are those which emerge in the process of change itself. There occurs there the translation of the creative potential into the actual, and as such is the work of political practice. For women, this concept envisages the re-taking of the aesthetic dimension which focuses upon body images or appearance, to a sensibility which transforms the aesthetic dimension so that it becomes the process of creative and transformational living. Because it is a remembering of the creative human potential it breaks down the reification of "women as body." As Marcuse (1978, p. 73) writes: "All reification is a forgetting." The concept of beauty, as an aesthetic quality, is reconceptualized in terms of radical political potential. There is an end to the segregation of the aesthetic from the real, and an end of the dehumanizing unity of commodification, and beauty, exploitation and pleasure (Marcuse, 1968). With consciousness of the reified position of woman's body, where the woman herself becomes aware of "being caught" in an aesthetics of "the visible," or the

surface appearances of the body, and the need for male approval of that appearance she is able to begin a different relationship to her own being. As women are able to redirect the question of identity towards authentic feelings, rather than the disguises of subjectivity, they illuminate how the body places constraints on female identity. Haug suggests the complexity of the interplay of connotative relations between being bodied and being woman.

...the naked body connotes identity, and produces the notion of unitary gendered self; it says, 'this is what I am as woman'. At the same time, the hope remains that the true self, the female human being, will also be perceived, that the gaze that rests on her will be directed inwards towards her character. Thus the body is complicit in turning the gaze to seek for something that lies within. (p. 174)

The body in feminine discourse demands that the internalized male gaze be recognized in order for the woman to be able to look within at her own being. Haug defines it as a process for "living from the inside outwards" (Haug). The body thought of as a focus for women's oppression, thus is also the potential vehicle for liberation.

### **Reflection Nine: A Prejudice Towards Difference**

There is something they know in their bodies. There is something they experience with their extra weight, their fat, that I don't. My body feels a repulsion to their heaviness, largeness, looseness. I watch in disgust as they maneuver calculating aisle widths, chair size, furniture strengths. Folds of flesh hangs from chins, arms and bellies.

I feel the weight of the loose, fat filled skin. A churning in my stomach and the rising of a bile taste in my throat is my visceral response to the sight of them. I can't even fool myself about this prejudice. I can't say my feelings come from concern about their health or psychological well-being. The sight of their unkempt, seemingly uncared for bodies surely projects my powerful ambivalence towards my own body which requires a constant

maintenance of weight and shape.

Fatness, we are made to believe, is a physical sign of nature out of control. It is a perception that is surely rooted in man's fear of nature, and the consequent need to have power over it. The masculine determination to take control of nature is re-expressed in terms of corporeal shaping: "well-built," "stacked," "shapley," "nice size," "well proportioned" - all capture a language which reflects the neurotic need to identify things in relation to size and therefore the ability to control ("Don't take on more than you can handle," "Take things in hand," "You need to get control of yourself," "Get a hold on the situation," "Get on top of things,"). This fear of nature projected onto the body becomes symbolic of the controlling relationship between man and nature (Haug). The relationship is perceived not in terms of intimacy and connection, rather it emphasizes an assumption of self-control over nature, and therefore over our bodies. To appear to be physically "out of control" of your body - to deviate from the socially predetermined norms - is judged in moral terms. Consequently, how one appears physically implies how one's dignity is judged. "Letting her body go" is understood as an expression of bad character. "Not taking care of yourself" is an expression of moral irresponsibility. The dilemma we face is between a question of health and a question of a morally defined aesthetics.

Haug (1987) captures in her work the relationship between how we verbally describe people and our moral judgement of them. Since the 1960's the moral consequences of fatness have intensified, especially around a discourse of abuse which morally condemns us as apparent self-inflicted harms to the body (e.g., in

overeating, lack of exercise, etc.). "Being fat," "having a tummy," "carrying extra weight," are understood as an achievement - something that we are actively doing, or have done, and can then take responsibility for. There can be no denial of the over riding effects of the appearance of women's bodies on their lives in this culture ( e.g., "You can never be too thin, or too rich"). My own verbal description is a painful one. Yet it provides a powerful example of the oppressive culture in which I live. This example of embodied prejudice signifies the unacceptable nature of difference in this culture. "What is the loathing of difference that lives there?" Audre Lorde urges each one of us to ask ourselves. It is a way of viewing which separates rather than unites.

As women we have been taught to either ignore our differences or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change. (1983, p. 99)

Lorde reminds us that without community there is not liberation, but community must not mean the shedding of difference, nor the pretense that difference doesn't exist. The inability to recognize the separating power behind society's definitions of acceptable women ensures the dehumanizing force found in the discourse of sameness. The denial of difference, is the denial of reality, of the actual conditions in which we live. Our bodies - black, female, old, fat, poor, abused - tell us of difference, and they tell us of sameness. We are women who must emancipate themselves through, as Lorde argues:

...the need and desire to nurture each other...and it is within that knowledge that our real power is rediscovered. It is this real connection, which is so feared by a patriarchal world. For it is only

under a patriarchal structure that maternity is the only social power open to women. (pp. 98-99)

There are differences between women, and these differences can either separate or educate. Making the personal become political begins with a knowledge and acceptance of difference, and is the foundation for a vision for political action concerned with social justice and human liberation.

### **Reflection Ten: Absent From Birth**

It was my own skin cracking at the corners of my mouth. I tried to lick my lips but there was no saliva. Heavy, swollen, saturated with pain, I forced my eyes to open. I awakened to a strange room. I wasn't alone - or was I? I didn't recognize the two other women who also occupied beds. There were empty beds between us and across the room - three empty and three occupied. I looked for signs that could give me information about who they were. I saw their detumescent stomachs.

Babies had been born. I felt a twings of fright. What had happened to me, to my once life-filled body? This is not my body, this numbed and heavy swollen carcass with folds of flesh oozing blood and milk.

There was a smell of death coming from inside of me. My hands rubbed over my once pregnant belly. Loose flesh rather than tightened skin answered my touch. I had never been here before, not in reality, not in my imagination. I had imagined a beautiful baby snuggling at my breast. Instead there was only me and this body.

I felt tired, alone, angry and had no strength to speak. My own hands delivered the message. I had been released, I had done my duty. I had delivered and survived.

I felt dirty and ashamed recognizing that I had no consciousness of the birthing event. Someone had touched, probed, watched, and experienced that which I had not - the birth of my first child. I would never again have the opportunity to experience this life giving process. I am never to know that time in my life.

To consciously participate in the act of creating life is to remember, as feminists writers such as Jane Roland Martin, Beverley Harrison, Dorothee Soelle, and others have argued, the feminine nature which actively creates, nurtures, and takes responsibility for life in a communal relationship with nature. In this anesthetized and objectified act, remembered here, I had become a passive partner. The act of giving birth is the most primal, essential creative act - the creation of life. Creating is not passive but an active and responsible forming. To take away the active nature of the woman in giving birth, can only mean to handover this creative responsibility to another. In this act there is an abdication of creative power. This scientific-medical process of birthing, where women are to be left in the hands of the "paternal father," and to be unconscious of the most primal act of creating, has in recent times, come under seige. Women are reclaiming the natural act of birthing, and in so doing, reclaiming their natural and active participation in the world as co-creators. It is a struggle to take back the natural claims of humanity as it calls into question the rationalistic and authoritarian ideology which has taught us to see ourselves as at war with nature.

### **Life Against Death**

#### **Reflection Eleven: An Event Out of Time**

I created ridges by pressing the de-elasticised skin.  
 Amazed I sat for a time that seemed to last for hours.  
 Watching, feeling, pressing this old white and blue-veined skin.

My small hands worked over hers.  
 Pressing ridges and watching them disappear as they sunk back into their covering.  
 Sometimes I could get as many as three ridges at a time,



before one would slowly and completely disappear.

She sat silently. There was only the sound of the clock,  
marking the time of days forever ticking.  
By the window, I kneeled reaching her knees with my chest,  
fascinated by the feel of her skin as it rested on her hand,  
on the arm of the chair in the afternoon sun.

In my visit as a young child to an elderly neighbor woman, recounted above, I learned early that the body marks the time of life. Etched in the lines and marked by the flaccid skin are the experiences of existence - pain, joy, anger, pleasure, concern, have all seeped into the flesh representing a knowing through living. The soft, tight and unmarked skin of babies inevitably becomes etched with these life experiences. **The body, as nothing else, ages with life.** Unlike the airbrush images found in the media, which deny any questions of life experience, marked faces and bodies compel us to note the impressions of life inscribed on the flesh. They make present for us the passing of time. They mark for us that which we fear most, the finality of death. The time when the body ceases to live. In modernity we cover over, fill out the lines, and evade the questions that are prompted by facing our own temporality.

Norman Brown (1982) postulates a theory for the denial of death in modern cultures. He argues that the transmutation of the death instinct resurfaces in human nature in two distinct, perverse and destructive ways - in our relationship to nature, and in sexual repression - the denial of our own bodies. The denial is, according to Brown, equivalent to the denial of death. The refusal to accept human mortality is comparable to the refusal of bodily pleasures that ends with the domination of nature. Issac Balbus explains Brown's theory.

Our bodies, as the living reminder of our mortality, must be repressed, forgotten; the transformation of the polymorphous perversity of the infant into the narrow, genitally concentrated sexuality of the adult not of the "outside" world but rather the child who cannot tolerate death: the inability to die and sexual repression are the two unique and related "privileges" of the human animal. We rise above ourselves, in short, in order to rise above death; the result is a deadening of our bodies. (Balbus, 1982, p. 294)

The effort to deny the passing of time, to become immortal, is the denial of dependence on the past, on tradition (Brown). This denial of the past and projection into the future always places one in the state of Becoming. To always be in a mental state projected toward future, is too also be in a process which depends upon the transcendence of Being - or concrete existence. Simply stated, it is a process for "Instrumental" living which stipulates war against death. In so doing, our consciousness is occupied in the task of avoiding the past (history) and the present (reality). In the avoidance life is lost. The Instrumental mode wins out as one tries to constitute one's immortality through objectification of life through an envisioned finished product for the future. The present becomes a means for the future. Brown defines this consciousness where:

...man is always trying to secure a spurious and delusive immortality for his acts by pushing his interest in them forward into time, in short, this is the time (consciousness) of the human being whose preoccupation with the future in the name of the (unconscious) drive to negate past prevents him from living in, and enjoying, the present. (cited in Balbus, p. 298)

Brown argues that a transformed consciousness of death requires a transformed body; a liberation of the body that would enable the "ressurrection of the body" (p. 299). By embracing one's mortality one is able to embrace one's own flesh.

Brown calls it a reversal of the Instrumental relationship to death, and thus to nature. Balbus comments upon Brown's theory.

Only the individual who truly loves his (and other's) body can establish a loving but not self-abnegating, intimate yet autonomous, relationship with the body of nature. (p. 300)

To be understood here, in Brown's theory is the inseparable connections among the acceptance of death, the celebration of the body, and the ability to live fully in the present. Unlike the Instrumental mentality, the "post-Instrumental" individual will be able to engage in present work with spontaneity and joy. The activity in which such liberated, eroticized individuals engage, vis-a-vis nature, can only be called "play." Only if eros - as the life instinct - can affirm the life of the body can the death instinct affirm death, and in affirming death magnify life (Brown).

### **Reflection Twelve: The Body Lying In State**

(Remembering the times I was with my father in his funeral business during family "viewings" of their beloved dead.)

One room was for the living; the other for the dead. They exist side-by-side in the funeral home. "The Body" lies in state, cold and pale, surrounded by a sickening smell produced by too many funeral wreaths. Chairs line the walls leaving an opening to the casket where "the body" lies. An opening to the door serves as both entrance and exit. One enters into the experience of death as a feeling of fear for life. "The body" lies at one end of the large room designated as the focal point.

Stillness represents the absence of life and the silence sounds loudly in the ears of those listening for life. Deep breaths comfort our fears of suffocating in the presence of death. Death becomes visible. The heaviness of the room fills one's body until every movement has to be actively struggled for and taken. Every touch between the living in this situation surrounded by death, carries the meaning of life.

There are no words that can express the anguish, fear, pain and concern - the grieving for life. We are left we only touching. We reach towards each other. As we come closer we are able to release the fear, pain, and need for each other as sounds that escape from our souls. Together we can grieve.

The awkwardness of the embrace, the closeness of our bodies, and the intimacy of our feelings shatter our protective coverings from remembering the finality of our own life only slightly. We both know that in that embrace, and in that intimacy, our protective coverings can dissolve.

Death can be seen, but only as an experience that is not one's own. It is carried in our bodies alongside of life, carried until it is. This knowledge of death makes possible the questioning of our existence. Yet, the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard points to the extradition of death in Western societies and the sharp distinction between life and death, or the living and the dead (Kellner, 1981). Baudrillard argues, all value in modern societies is placed on life, on the living. Death is repressed - we are impelled to not think or talk about it. Like Brown and Berger, Baudrillard also notes that this denial of death is a repression which returns to haunt us all the more powerfully. Baudrillard suggests that the repression of death fueled the era of production and accumulation in industrial capitalism. The psychic sphere rooted in the fear of death gives rise to desires "TO KILL, TO POSSESS, TO DEVOUR" (p. 104). Consequently both from a psychological point of view, and from a sociological point of view, our society is a death culture. The result of living in the fear of death is the tendency to submit to social authorities (the Church, the State) with their promise for immortality or protection from death.

Unlike so-called primitive societies where one lives with the dead - their spirits, memories, achievements - in modern societies death has become excluded from

social life. Not only has actual death been repressed, but so also the symbolic death in which what is represented is the death and rebirth of oneself in a transformative process. In this inability to "let" the old and possibly destructive ways die, one is not able to change dangerous situations.

### **Reflection Thirteen: The Visible Implies An Eye**

(On visiting a great aunt shortly before her death)

I entered her home. She lived only a couple of blocks from me. I had been there with my brother twenty years before. I couldn't tell you if it was the same woman, but she remembered me; "You're Sherry aren't you?"

She talked about family, about my mother, and she talked about her sickness. I look at this woman who was facing her own temporality alone. And I listened to her defend the worth of her own life. She said, "I've worked hard all my life. I've done what is right. I find my contentment in this. That's what life is about, working hard."

Her words reflected her own passing. She spoke of herself in the past tense. The voice belonged to a body that was dying. It connected to a consciousness that remained loyal to the structures of her being - the way she had lived her life. Yet, her eyes told of her suspicions towards the questions inflicted upon her - "Why life, why death?"

Her lungs became unable to continue the struggle for life, for breath. They collapsed. Whenever I pass the house I remember that encounter with her life. What penetrated her whole being that afternoon was the question of existence, a frantic looking for reassurance about the meaning of her life. The visible implies the eye.

What I could not see was what had disappeared, what had abandoned her, the cavity that grew until it sucked her dry of life. For-the-sake-of **what** did she live and for-the-sake-of what did she die?

One's existence appears as life. Living and life become identical as symbolic meaning. "Yet the seer, when human," states Berger (1984, p. 50) "is conscious of what his eye cannot and will never see because of time and distance." The seen and the unseen confirms and defies existence. What is visible includes the seer,

and excludes her or him. The desire to see or have seen, explains Berger (1984), has a deep ontological basis. With the disappearance of what we have seen, we face a loss of that which confirms our own existence. The constitution of identity is dependent upon past relationships. These memories produce the sense of continuity in our lives. They constitute a narrative, a story, that binds together our own identity. They represent a constant attempt to make connections between space and time, between the present and the past. From these memories a particular reality is woven. With the disappearance of someone, or the forgetting of some history, we face a disappearance of ourselves, or are threatened by the no longer present experiences through which our identity was constituted. Without remembrances of those people and past we suffer a loss of self.

The visible produces a faith in reality. Memories also produce a sense of reality which is held and developed as an inner eye or intuitive sense. The latter governs what is seen in the former. This "hermeneutic" projects expectations onto the present. Between the two, the visible and the no longer visible, a tension is produced. It is within that tension that meaning is found - a revelation. **The moment of revelation is when appearance and meaning become identical, when the outer and inner space coincide**, the seer achieves harmony with the visible. Berger (1982,p. 52) writes, "To lose all sense of exclusion: to be at the center.

We hold within our bodies that which can no longer be seen and remember it as "reality." This bodily knowing provides us with the necessary sense of continuity in our lives. The capacity to connect, to be concerned with, to care about, and

therefore to remember with passion and compassion, is what brings us a sense of being centered, a sense of wholeness. The body as the primary site for inner and outer interaction between the social and the individual makes possible the sensual reforming of knowledge as mediated through and by the body. With an intimate connection between the surface phenomena of the body and the essence as life experiences there comes an aesthetic wholeness, in the Marxian sense of aesthetics. This aesthetic wholeness represents the promise of wholeness in an age of fragmentation where spirit and body have been so viciously separated.

#### **Reflection Fourteen: The Question**

The look was painful, searching.  
I forced myself to see,  
this other in me.

Fixing my life on hers,  
draining out the final question.  
Why?  
Why did I exist?

Knowing she was looking at me,  
as everyone.  
The looking was painful,  
as everyone has no answer.

## **Intimacy**

### **Reflection Fifteen: Touching**

There is nothing more real than being touched. It confirms our existence as something concrete. To be physically touched and spiritually touched both repairs and makes us whole again. The feeling of "completeness," the feeling of "oneness," the feeling of "relatedness," the feeling of "fullness" are all evoked as I am re-embodied by the touch of other.

I remember the warmth and strength I receive in that touch from another. I am able to release the barrier of protection I have surrounded myself with - words, clothes, books, work, degrees. My flesh becomes soft. My being is released to explore and know those precious moments when I seek the comfort which surrounds and embraces my femaleness, my presence as woman.

I am reminded of the masculine part of me as I experience your strength, and groundedness in the world. You remind me of my own vulnerability, and with it the possibility for trust; you remind me of the pain and delight which bind relationships; you remind me of my intellectual self that has suffered the stunting from invalidation; you remind me of the possibility for self-transcendence as I come to care about other; you remind me of the ecstatic feelings held inside me; you remind me in your touch of the solidarity felt between two people in relationship; you remind me of the inseparability of love and justice.

Now that I know the richness and power of human touch, I can never forget, as our bodies unite in solidarity for love and justice in the concreteness of life.

So close were our bodies. We had fallen asleep knowing the warmth of another when lying together. There was a silence and separation only our bodies could fill. The fluidity of our beings seem to mix in the early morning hours. We seem to come to a state of pure existence. It is a time between being conscious and unconscious. Barriers have slipped away in the night as we release ourselves from protective coverings.

Naked we touch. The presence of life is captured in those few brief moments when we touch with love and allow another to experience that which we keep most hidden and protected in our bodies - our hearts.



Relationships among - women and men, women and women, men and men, parent and child, people of color and other races, old and young, healthy and diseased, human to earth, human to any other living thing - requires the ability to distance oneself, "to see" differences, and the ability to connect oneself, "to feel" relatedness. The important point is the communal knowing through our sensuality. Beverly Harrison notes the relationship between knowledge and sensuality.

...all knowledge, including our moral knowledge, is body-mediated knowledge. All knowledge is rooted in our sensuality. We know and value the world, if we know and value it, through our ability to touch, to hear, to see. Perception is foundational to conception. (1981, p. 36)

Our power, all power, is rooted in feeling. What we perceive, think, conceive - all are dependent upon sensuality. Feeling through our bodies mediates the knowledge as it connects us to the world. Harrison suggests when we cannot feel we lose our connection to the world. If feeling is damaged or cut off, our ability to reason, to image, or to act in the world is impaired. With the loss of feeling, of connection, of relatedness, we lose the capacity to conceive, value, or act as moral agents in the world. Harrison argues:

Failure to live deeply in "our bodies, ourselves" destroys the possibility of moral relations between us. (p. 13)

Feelings, however, as Harrison suggests, are not an end in themselves. The attempt is not to get one "to feel more," or "feel better," or to "feel happier." Again we are reminded the question is not "how I feel" but "what do I do with what I feel." Harrison points to the major source of rising moral insensitivity as one which is

derived from being out-of-touch with our bodies. We have learned to live so much in our heads that we can no longer feel connectedness to other living things. It is a radical act of love that is needed - expressing human solidarity and bringing mutual relationship to life - to do justice.

It is, as Sharon Welch (1985) terms it, a poetics of revolution where there is the acceptance of living a paradoxical tension. This tension expresses the fragile balance between "absolute commitment" to what one feels is right and just, and "infinite suspicion" of those feelings or beliefs, allowing for challenges and modifications to avoid moral imperialism or triumphalism (p. 91). It is a discourse which speaks to our souls, our desires for wholeness, mutuality, and self-transcendence.

Dorothee Soelle references both the Jewish and Christian traditions which recognize the interconnection of loving and knowing in honor of our need for wholeness. She writes:

In the Hebrew Bible the verb "to know" has two different meanings; one refers to perceiving and understanding, the other to sexual intercourse. (1984, p. 147)

Soelle brings together sexuality and intellectuality. She suggests if we apply the cognitive connotations of the verb "to know" to our sexuality, then to know someone, sexually it means being aware of the other, observing and recognizing who he or she is, and experiencing the many facets of the beloved's personality (p. 147). In severing our carnal and emotional desires from the desire to know, our knowledge of other diminishes and becomes passionless.

Historically it has been man's prerogative to split off affection from lust, to perpetuate the mind-body split, in order to control and manipulate his own manifestations of his separated being. "Oneness" and "relatedness" give way to separations and abstractions. Yet Soelle calls for women to not simply adopt patriarchal sexual mores in an attempt to overcome inequality. She suggests one must stay close to the voice inside that calls for wholeness. There is a need for unity of the agentic and the responsible found in relationships.

Reflection on human sexuality is incomplete without the sociopolitical dimension. Soelle calls this dimension of our sexuality "solidarity." To love more is to know more of our partner and of our human community. Eros and agape rejoin when ecstatic feelings in love heighten our awareness of the violence that imprisons others and denies them life's fullness (Soelle). Love is not separable from justice. In concluding, Soelle gives powerful metaphors for "making love" and "making justice":

The drive to make love and to make justice should be one; it will become one the more we overcome the current split between private and public life ... But if our embodiment in lovemaking does not move us beyond the acute, narrow joys and sorrows of our own bodies to the body politic, then it has not gone far enough. (pp. 152-153)

Life is a principle, not a thing. The body is not life, it is a manifestation of life. To touch and be touched holds memories of human connection. Loving touch bears with it the hope for brotherhood and sisterhood. With love we affirm and are affirmed. In the sociopolitical struggle against death from hunger, disease, exploitation, war, destruction of the earth, and against hopelessness there is a great and growing need for our capacity to become "body-full" with love.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **AN AESTHETIC PROCESS: TOWARDS A SENTIENT PEDAGOGY**

I will conclude this work by situating it in three separate discourses that I believe have been central to this dissertation. They will include the philosophical - as related to "thinking about thinking"; the area of curriculum theory - in terms of the significance of the dialectical process between personal narrative and cultural analysis; and critical pedagogy - in view of the argued limitations of its one-sided, rationalistic orientation and the importance of the body as a site for critical reflection. The body here provides the dialectical linkage between the particular and the general, the individual and the social. Such a linkage has been deemed necessary for understanding of one's everyday experiences as they are structured in relationship to the culture and one's life-world.

#### **A Practical Philosophy**

I have been concerned in this dissertation with the capacity of the individual to act in a conscious way upon one's world - earlier referred to as praxis. This becomes possible through the understanding of one's own situatedness in the world. I have aligned my work with others who have described this as a dialectical process between self and culture, between thought and action, and between the dominant discourses and how we experience and make sense of our lives. It is

a liberatory concern with understanding the concrete particularity of our existence, and at the same time, with the possibilities for social change.

The influential scholar Terry Eagleton, in his most recent book (The Ideology of the Aesthetic), takes up and emphasizes the philosophical themes which have continually emerged in my work. I have found his work to be especially supportive of my own thinking in the connections he draws between the colonization of reason and the subjugation of the body's experiences. He states:

A recovery of the importance of the body has been one of the most precious achievements of recent radical thought... (1990, p. 7)

The discourse of the body for Eagleton is synonymous with the aesthetic. The aesthetic refers to the whole region of human perception and sensation - the body experiencing. Eagleton gives insight to the philosophical exclusions and the deeper political and cultural hegemony from which it is born.

The distinction which the term 'aesthetic' initially enforces in the mid-eighteenth century is not one between 'art' and 'life', but between material and immaterial: between things and thoughts, sensations and ideas, that which is bound up with your creaturely life as opposed to that which conducts some shadowy existence in the recesses of the mind. It is as though philosophy suddenly wakes up to the fact that there is a dense, swarming territory beyond its own mental enclave which threatens to fall utterly outside its sway. That territory is nothing less than the whole of sensate life together - the business of affections and aversions, of how the world strikes the body on its sensory surfaces, of that which takes root in the gaze and the guts and all that arises from our most banal, biological insertion into the world. **The aesthetic concerns this most gross and palpable dimension of the human, which post-Cartesian philosophy, in some curious lapse of attention, has somehow managed to overlook. It is thus the first stirrings of a primitive materialism - of the body's long inarticulate rebellion against the tyranny of the theoretical [emphasis added].** (p. 13)

In his history of Western thought the concern with the "absolute monarch of Reason" alienated from philosophy the breathing, sentient life (Eagleton). The quest is not to surrender to the "subjective," but rather to bring the subjective into the scope of reason, and further acknowledge that reasoning itself does not occur somewhere outside the particular hermeneutic derived from one's experiences; reason itself is inseparable from the language, experience, and culture of historically and socially situated human beings.

Recent feminist and postmodern theorizing stands against the ideal of disembodied knowledge. There is no Archimedian viewpoint; rather, knowledge is always situated and constructed in a dialectical relationship between the individual and the culture in which she/he lives. For this reason, a great deal of feminist work has attempted to ground knowledge in the body. The body comes to be seen as the personal material upon which inscriptions of particular discourses of the culture become embedded. These inscriptions regulate the ways we think and live our social relations. They are constructed in multiple ways (i.e., race, class, gender, age, physical size). This notion of situated knowledge as it is incorporated by the human subject, and as it is inscribed on the body as a lived process, has been the central issue for my work. In terms of this I have discussed and given examples of how the body becomes a vehicle for oppression, resistance, and liberation. I have written the subject as one which can be hegemonically inscribed in a particular culture, while at the same time consciously engaged in resisting and/or changing the culture. The shift in my work is from one of detached, abstract discourses of knowledge - thinking about thinking - to a

concern for human freedom. It speaks to a process of bringing to awareness, through critical reflection, the social/historical and cultural inscriptions which, through one's body shape one's life, and through this knowledge makes possible the questioning and re-creation of the human condition.

Recently postmodern and feminist theory have explored the "situated" (or perhaps more appropriately stated, the "unsituated") body. The disembodied discourse of epistemological objectivity and neutral judgement has been referred to as "the view from nowhere." It has prompted such questions as: Whose Truth? Whose nature? Whose version of reason? Whose history? Whose tradition? (Susan Bordo, 1990). What has been exposed is that **there is no view from nowhere** - no subject situated outside of a social and cultural context. For Cartesian epistemology, the body requires transcendence if one is to achieve this view. To achieve this God's eye view, one must "see" objectively, undistorted by human perspective. Yet, in the feminist and postmodern discourse the body is reconceived. It becomes impossible to transcend the body. The latter is reconceptualized as the material presence which relativizes perception and thought as it fixes the knower in time and space.

The categorization of my work, I believe, lies within a postmodern feminist discourse which insists that the struggle around epistemological concerns is inseparable from questions about the "real" world, and therefore intellectual issues are also issues about human freedom and personal transformation. There is a joining of the philosophical and the political, by incorporating the notions of situated knowledge. The philosophical discussion is at the same time a political

the inquiry into the concrete reality of existence is coupled to the desire for human freedom. The core of my intellectual inquiry and pedagogical work takes seriously the political dimension of our personal lives with the conviction that the future belongs to those who can think and act critically, creatively, and morally to challenge forms of domination and re-make their lives and the world in which they live.

### **Curriculum Theory: A Personal Praxis**

I will share here my own experience in writing the body memory section of this work (Chapter Four). I will be speaking with two voices. The first voice is that of the personal - constructing a narrative of my own life. My second voice speaks to the issue of curriculum theory.

It is in Chapter Four that I have re-counted some of the reflective memories drawn from my life experiences. As a reader, it is here that you experience for the first time the actual process whereby I construct a personal narrative, and then reveal through cultural analysis how sense might be made of these experiences. Through the theoretical lenses I have chosen, particular interpretations from existential experiences are made available. From these personal narratives and cultural interpretations of my life-world comes insight into my own situated position in the world as a child, student, woman, educator, artist, and mother. The reader finds the multiplicity of the selves that I live. There is no unitary or essential subject, but being that reveals its wobbly, and sometimes incoherent nature that wants to encompass the totality of my experiences. The task of inquiry is one of



"circle talking" where the line of demarcation between the interpretive and the objective becomes unclear, even fused. Yet, as a student of Enlightenment thinking, I found it difficult to insert my own voice other than where it became clearly marked as personal narrative. To speak in two voices, as earlier referred to, brings forth my own incorporation into the hegemonic split between abstract and personal language. The impossibility of some "pure" analysis is disclosed, whereas both the so-called rational-scientific and the irrational-subjective come to be seen in their social/historical constructions. The artificiality of the separation come to the fore. One is raised to the level of "Reason" and validated as "Truth," while the other remains hidden in the crevices of our most private thought. It is in the crevices that I seek to find the embodied structure of feeling which is brought to consciousness through reasoned reflection.

My thinking about what I would choose as memories for Chapter Four went through several levels of reflection. My stories were ones which presented me with experiences that had become apart of my being; I paid attention to what surfaced and trying to hold onto the feelings as I recalled the experiences. Indeed, it was a kind of drawing up from my flesh the emotional memories that were held there. Some stories were taken out, such as sitting in church services each Sunday morning. And many were never written. My first criterion was that the memories were important to me; important in that I found they represented strongly embedded issues with which I have struggled, and continue to struggle with today. What I found through the process were issues which challenge my own social beliefs and the underlying "life or erotic energies" with which these beliefs are

invested, and formative in the structuring of my own identity. The second criterion was that the issues were to not only engage me personally but would in some way evoke from the reader reflections upon similar experiences - they would resonate with the life-world experience of the reader.

The greatest struggle in writing this dissertation came with Chapter Four. To recall memories in their sensory somatic state called for me to capture and interrogate emotional states with their many levels of pain and joy. During days of "living" within these experiences I felt the anguish of "dangerous memories" (as Sharon Welch names them). For when memories are called to consciousness there is a confrontation with one's thoughts and feelings. The aesthetic, i.e., the feeling and the sensate, is brought to the surface and reveals the deepest repressions which marks one's existence. When brought to consciousness they can not easily be returned to the state of denial.

As a woman I became angrier as I developed a more critical understanding of the encompassing patriarchal discourse within which I have lived and continue to live, as well as stronger from these understandings of my own particular oppressions, hidden repressions, and modes of resistance. Aligned with Critical Pedagogy, I agree with the importance of personal stories joined to cultural analysis which can make one conscious of one's life-world, and can therefore give transformative meaning to it. For myself, this reflective process has enabled me to engage in creating a a critical pedagogic process in the traditional educational setting, as well as, in the artistic realm. (In the classroom, both traditional and in dance technique classes, I am able to engage in directing inquiry toward students

where they culturally situate and understand personal experience. In creating dance, the choreographic process follows this kind of pedagogy as it provides a vehicle for "making the familiar strange" for the dancers involved - making conscious the social construction of one's life, how one is positioned in the world, and the human potential for creating change. Dance itself becomes "political art", or in Marcuse's terms "authentic art," in that it situates both dancer and audience member within a particular context with the intent of bringing awareness to the human condition. The call is to present, through dance, "what is" of our life-world, and to also present images of visions of "what can be.")

Interestingly, as I first began writing Chapter Four, I found it difficult to separate the personal narrative from the analytical one. (I even structured my margins in the same manner, representing the difficulty in making a distinction.) Later, I opted to maintain the separation by displaying the two separate voices in different writing formats. Yet, as I read the memory section and the analysis section I continued to find distinct overlaps in the writing. Separations were increasingly difficult to make between myself as a subject and myself as a theorist. There was a confusion - confusion here meaning not "muddled" but rather 'fusion' (Eagleton). It is **an aesthetic fusion** or unity where emotion provides the essence (the sum total of the principal internal aspects of a process) and thought provides the phenomena (the immediate outward expression of this process). It is a **manifestation of the dialectical unity of internal and external life** that one lives, bringing to light the interconnections between them (Henri Arvon). It is then a **hybrid form of cognition which discloses the inner structure of the concrete.**

As such it demands its own appropriate discourse recognizing that the world of perception and experience cannot simply be derived from abstract universal law (Eagleton). It is such a discourse I have attempted to illustrate in my work.

The nature of this methodological process is noted by William Pinar (1978) as "currere." Currere as a model for curriculum involves both the teacher and the student in remembering their experiences with as little editing as possible. When done, the analysis begins. It is both personal as it turns inward for reflection, and social as this affective insight is reconnected to being-in-the-world. This primordial physicality directs us to a recognition that any understanding is grounded in an intuitive pre-givenness of the world. The quest is not to surrender to either the pre-given state of being or the merely subjective, but rather the project is to formalize the life-world (Pinar). The attempt is the production of a new human subject that becomes educated in the process of critical reflection for self understanding, and therefore is capable of conscious choice. When connected to the notion of a liberatory or prophetic education it can become a re-speaking with the heart's core.

This critical pedagogic process, then goes beyond "psychoanalysis" to cultural analysis for the purpose of gaining awareness as to the basic structures of human existence. As such it is an educative process which contributes to the struggle for a praxis where, to paraphrase Marx, the purpose is not simply to understand the world but to change it. It is a radicalization of reason which includes the aesthetic as a contributor to the possibility of human transformation. Eagleton writes:

... there is something in the body which can revolt against power which inscribes it ... (p. 28)

### **Poetic Justice: Revision Critical Pedagogy**

People stand before suffering like those who are color-blind, incapable of perception and without sensibility. (Soelle, 1975, p. 38)

Such blindness, Dorothee Soelle suggests, is only possible in a society which is unable to perceive suffering, not only one's own, but especially the suffering of others. It is a kind of "freedom" from suffering that levels out one's sensual life - that is a life in which feeling is either forgotten or denied. This desensitization process permeates our human connections and provides the apathetic condition which Soelle claims so characterizes our culture. Soelle (p. 36) describes apathy as "a form of the inability to suffer." Apathy, as a state of being, can only be present with the repression of one's feelings of connections to oneself, others, and the world.

Recent surveys have made clear that an apathetic consciousness, as a way of relating to life experiences, is dominant within the young American culture. This consciousness has with it a corresponding absence of passion for life, and commitments felt as compassionate human beings. The overwhelming consequence of this apathetic condition distances us from the sensual imagery that inscribes out emotional life and sensual existence. Life energies become congealed to create an illusion of "reality" where there are "no disruptions," "no involvements," and "no sweat" (Soelle). To "feel," to re-solidify human connections means to be willing to suffer, what I called previously in this dissertation, "being skinned-alive." To do so is a movement of resistance against passionless lives - against alienation, indifference, repression, and separation. In such a movement,

we may again become grounded. The body experiencing is recognized as that which makes possible the reconnection to our own lives, and others; that makes possible the recovery of our humanity from its apathetic condition. It is the body which carries the knowledge, the memories of love, joy, softness, warmth, laughter, touch, and human desire for freedom. This is the premise upon which human liberation and social transformation rests.

My work attends to the importance of the body as the necessary route we must take as a way of re-thinking, and re-connecting our moral, cognitive, and aesthetic selves in terms of a critical pedagogy. These selves in relationship are what can bring about a "poetic justice" - a justice which is never complete but constantly extends itself into new areas of human existence and experience. The haunting images of deadened, lifeless bodies of students in classrooms, planted in front of televisions, having conversations limited to fashions and football, presents to us educators a difficult task. The task is larger than a repositioning of the historical and cultural subject. No longer can we suggest that the ability to rationally apprehend a situation is enough. The lack of desire, of feeling, of erotic life energies puts before us a different kind of question, and need for a different focus for our pedagogy. And it is this question that has been central to this dissertation.

Knowledge without sensibility and sensuality leaves the cold, unfeeling shell of breathing flesh devoid of the capacity for love, suffering, joy, and compassion. A pedagogy concerned with human liberation must insist upon a sensual language for education in which laughter and crying evoke the sounds of love and justice in

the classroom, words spoken dance with meaning the stories of each life, and experience touches to form a more compassionate, fully human life.

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